Volume Forty-Six, Number Three, September 1968

Commentary

What Happened in France *George Lichtheim*

Black Power at Columbia *Stephen Donadio*

Poland: The Party and the Jews *Paul Lendvai*

Why the Poor People's Campaign Failed *Tom Kahn*

Letter from Israel *Edward Grossman*

Television and Reality *Neil Compton*

Return of the Repressed *John Thompson*

A Controversy on the Psalms
Mitchell Dahood
Milton Himmelfarb

Books in Review

David Daiches *Joseph Epstein* *Michael Novak*
David Schiller *Walter Goodman*

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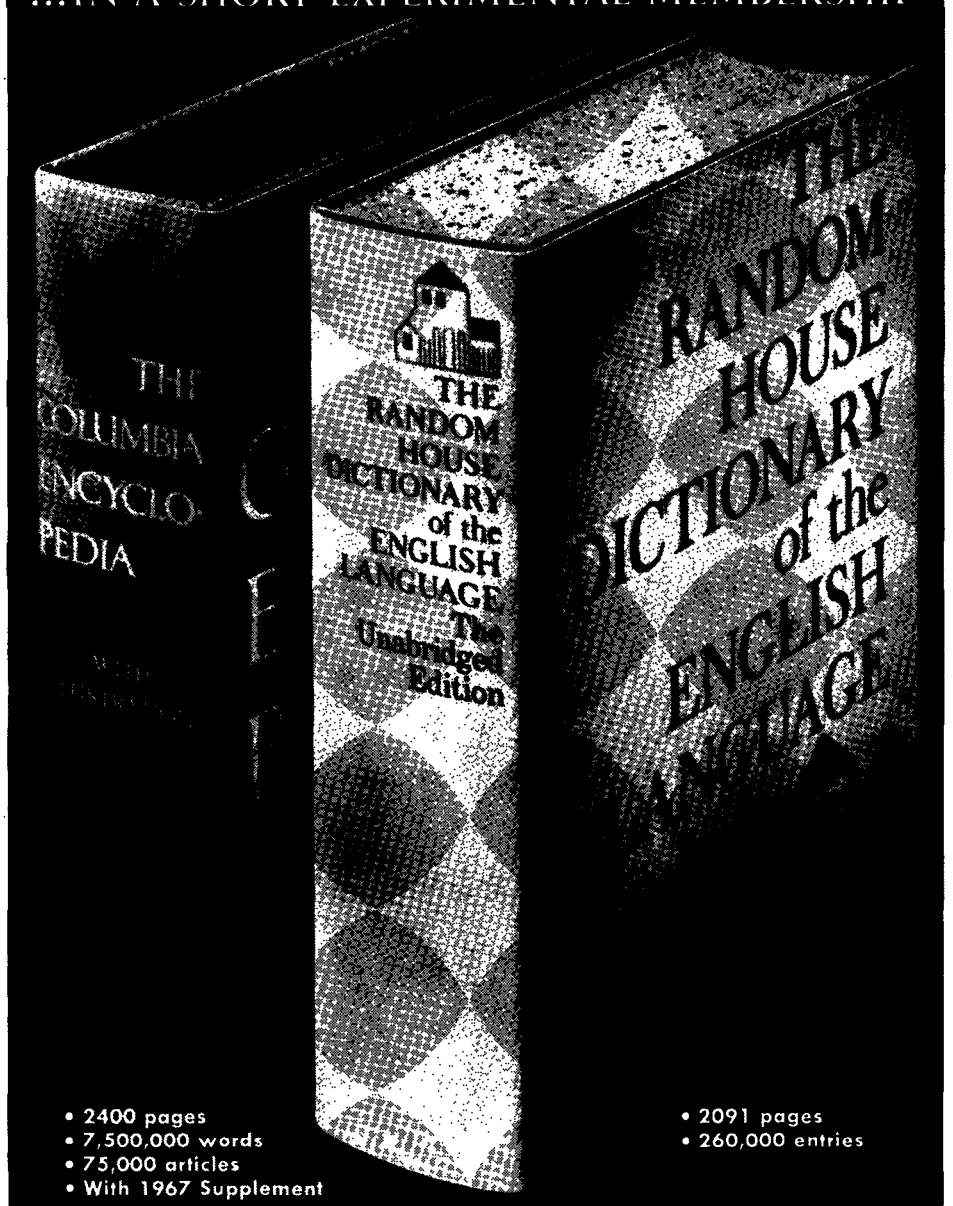
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Commentary

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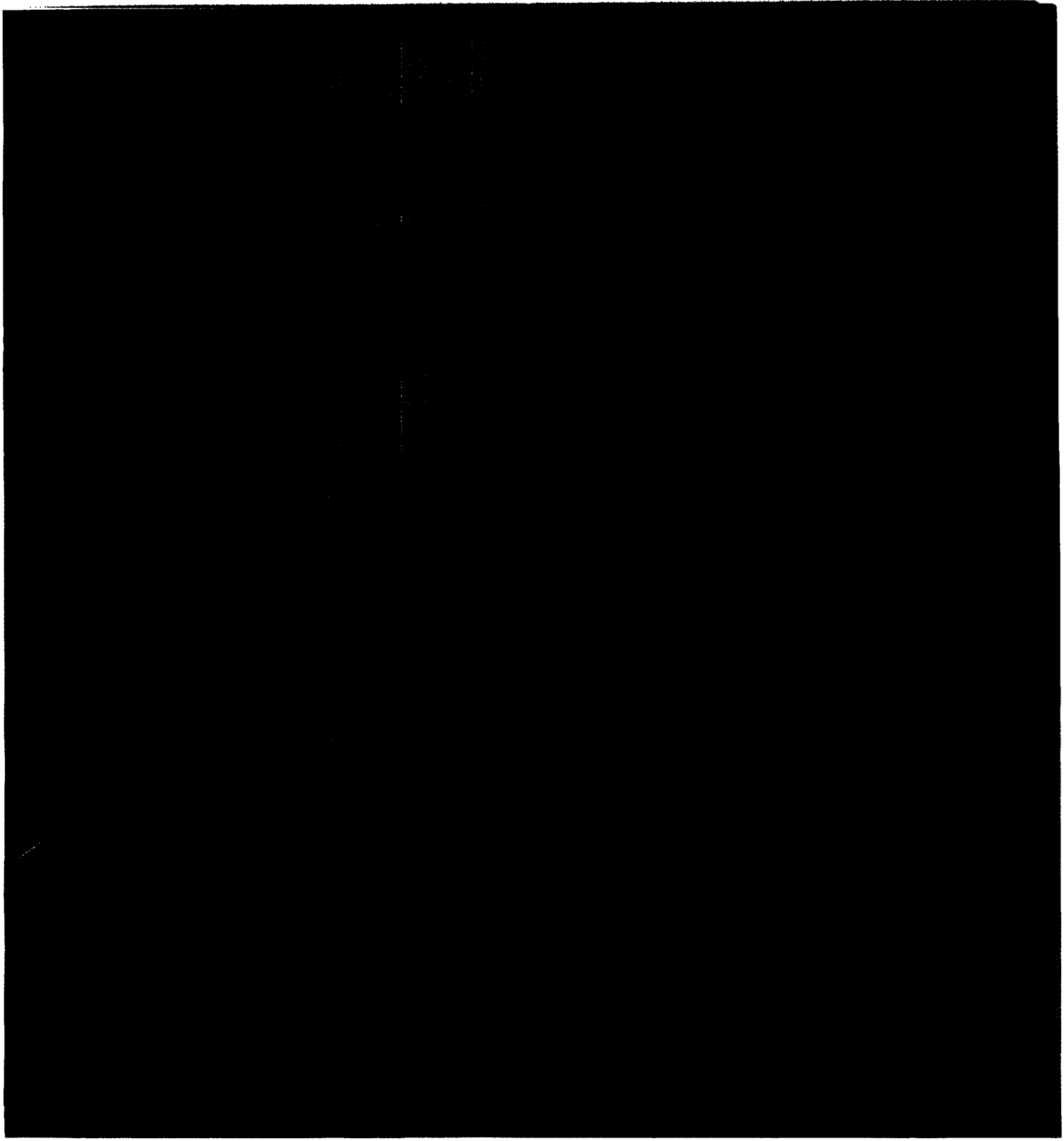

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Letters from Readers

On the Left

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Nathan Glazer's provocative essay ["The New Left and Its Limits," July] raises many significant issues, but his analysis contains major inconsistencies. As an associate editor of the SDS journal *Radical America* and an active participant in the Current Left (it's not terribly "New"), I would be most pleased if you could find space in your fine journal for a discussion of some of these.

Professor Glazer objects to the fact that the New Left sees problems as being "fundamentally problems of power." Yet, when discussing the inappropriateness of the Johnson-Rusk Vietnam policy, he decries the fact that foreign policy has become "too exclusively the province of the President and his closest advisers." This is not to suggest that Glazer's analysis is incorrect: it does suggest, however, that the President's power is too great and that Glazer himself frames his critique from the perspective of power.

Glazer notes that the New Left "believes that man is good by nature, and corrupted by institutions." This hypothesis, which I believe to be only partially correct (the latter part seems highly untenable), is hardly Marxist *alone*. Rather, it is the assumption of classical liberalism, socialism (both "utopian" and "scientific"), and the very basis of democratic thought. Moreover, it would seem that if one believes in man's essential goodness, one also believes that power is basically "neutral" and that it can be used to benefit humanity as well as to enslave it. Thus, a neutral form of power like the atom, for instance (which is both a scientific and a political form), can be potentially used for "good" and not only—as it has been historically used—for destruction. It depends upon several variables, not the least of which are the designs of the holder of power, the government.

I would further suggest that the opportunity to protest is really of little value if protest does not, in one way or another, alter the manipulation of power. With a trace of nostalgia, Professor Glazer fondly recalls the "good old days" of the New Left when dialogue was cheap and plentiful and "there was deep soul-searching about the morality of engaging in activity that provoked the violence of political opponents and police." All that "soul-searching," however, was directed toward certain ends: toward discovering the elements of social repression, toward the formulation of critiques of the existing society and of the modes of action and the alternatives open to us. Such dialogues and "morality sessions" are by no means things of the past, but the context has changed radically. Professor Glazer certainly needs no lecture from me on recent disruptions and the changes to which they have led. It is a veritable truism today to note that poor people must riot before they can get an OEO project; that universities have to be shaken to the very roots before students *and faculty* are given the most basic of rights they demand and deserve; that it was mobilization against the draft which brought about a renewed interest in the Selective Service System's injustices. . . .

The analysis of institutions—which are by definition maintained citadels of power and authority—lies at the very heart of the New Left critique. Glazer, in point of fact, can be accused of something for which the New Left has continually been criticized: an ahistorical frame of reference. To fail to recognize the value of an "institution-power" interpretation of society is to deny the achievements of the Beards, Veblen, Mills, and countless others, and to miss the major contribution of contemporary American social science.

Glazer is amiss when he suggests that we just happened upon the notion that the "problem lies . . . in all types of fixed and formal institutions." When institutions are "fixed" and static—in relation to power and its manipulation—can we truly speak of them in the context of freedom and democracy? I think not. A "fixed" institution is grounded in the lexicon of yesterday and as such, reflects the wishes of yesterday's people almost exclusively. For a set of institutions to be truly representative, they must be flexible enough to tolerate and include all opinions. And power, the dynamic in which an institution deals, must be as flexible as the institution itself.

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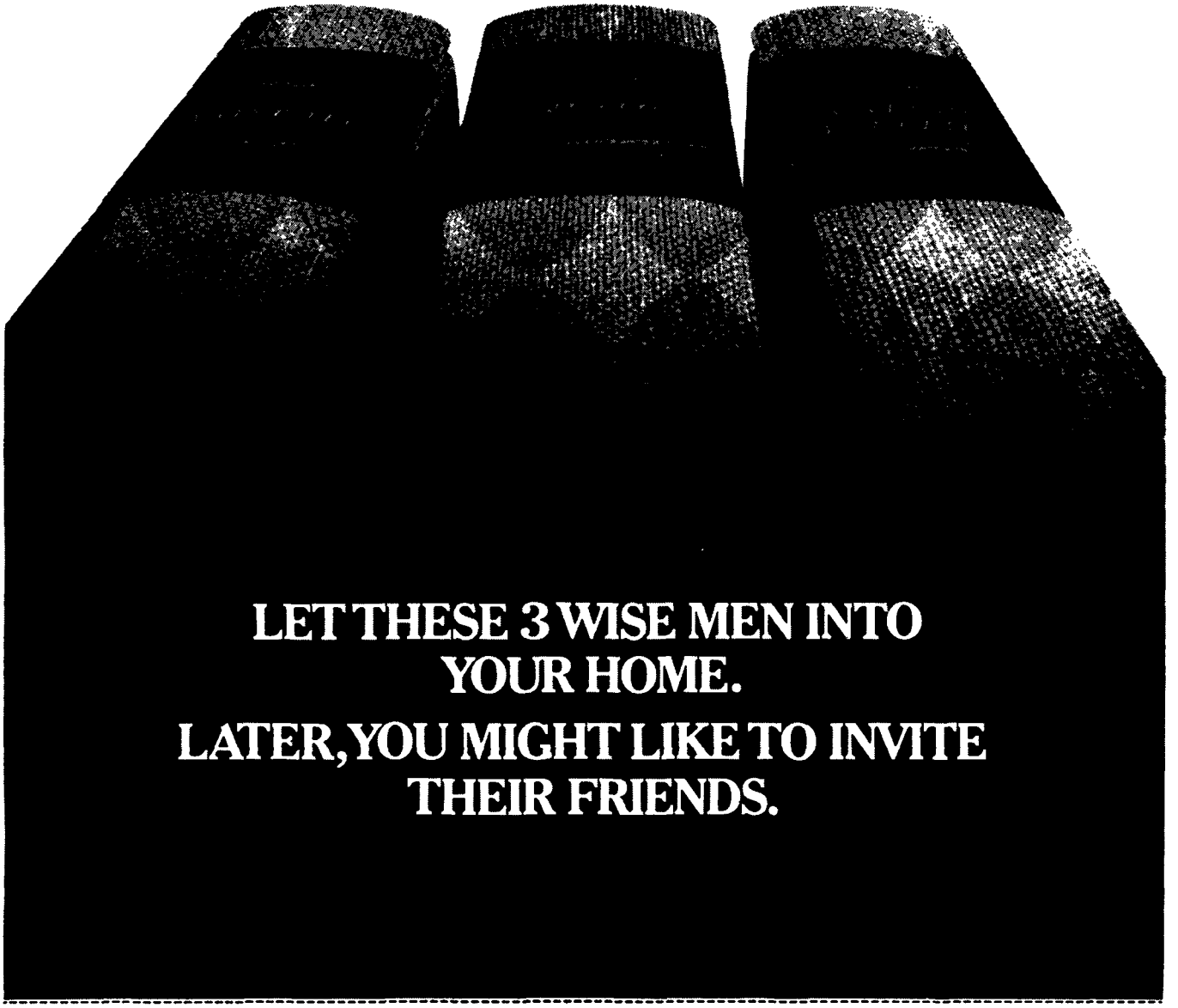

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Society is an ever changing, organic form and unless power changes with the life-flow of the society, those institutions which control power must be judged corrupt and outmoded and the institutional personalities—the captains as well as the mates—must be made to see the light if they propose to run the ship.

MARK B. LAPPING
Department of History
Penn State University
State College, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Nathan Glazer's article reveals more about the limits of liberal discourse than about the New Left or the state of the nation. The rhetorical logic of the essay is simple: the problem is not capitalism; the problem is complexity; the New Left has no solutions.

Glazer admits that the universities are in a state of crisis, but he does not ask who owns them. Who are the trustees? Who are the regents? Glazer admits that Vietnam is a disaster but views it as an isolated mistake. Doesn't he know that we have troops and CIA agents in fifty countries? Why doesn't he mention the fact that the government in Guatemala was overthrown by the United Fruit Company and the CIA after Arbenz Guzman nationalized United Fruit holdings? Why doesn't he ask who controls the mass media in this country? These *are* the questions radicals are concerned with. Glazer's avoidance of the irrationality of corporate capitalism as a whole —"capitalism is too old-fashioned a term to arouse much interest"— can fool no one but those who are determined not to understand what is going on in this country.

Certainly radicals do not have all the answers, but they know the right questions. To argue, as Glazer does, that everything is very complex, is simply to add to the smog. Such skating on the surface by liberals is designed to reassure a nervous, middle-class audience that everything is really all right, that no radical changes are necessary or possible. It does not help us to understand or to act.

STEVE SHAPIRO
Department of English
University of California
Irvine, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I do not presume to speak for the New Left, but I do want to point out that Nathan Glazer does not understand one of its basic thrusts. It is difficult to say that there is nothing wrong with a society which permits one man to declare a holy crusade for democracy. . . . The real crime of American society lies in thinking, as Mr. Glazer obviously does, that America has the right to decide when it will or will not wage war in or about Vietnam, Thailand, or Cuba. Nor is it only the President who is guilty; the people of America, as well as our institutions, reinforce this infantile national egocentrism. . . .

Mr. Glazer delineated "three principal areas" with which New Left radicals are concerned. In all these areas he reflects the nation's sickness and arrogance—the belief, conscious or not, that America . . . has the right to determine how, in what way, and whether or not a person or a people should exist. This applies to Vietnam, the ghetto, and the campus. Even Thieu and Ky resent America's mindless presence in their nation. . . .

WILLIAM S. KORNICH
West Hartford, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY

. . . I characterize myself as a New Leftist within Limits—the limits being the acceptance of bureaucracy as the only mode of operation for a complex and populous society. However, I do not agree with Professor Glazer that the bureaucracies should be left to the technicians until such time as some monumental evil results. By then it is too late. Lack of sensitivity, a disease of present-day bureaucracy—at least in welfare and education—may not be a monumental, clear, and distinct evil, but it is one which exists and which makes life miserable for those who cannot get out from under it. Therefore, I would accept the revolutionary methods of the New Left to bring about the creation of a new sensitivity that would make local welfare departments respond to the human needs of their clients. . . . Their guerrilla tactics . . . in these areas seem to be quite effective.

Nor do I hold with Professor Glazer's view of our involvement in Vietnam as "the result of a series of monumental errors." I, too, would love to blame this whole messy affair on Mr. Johnson and his advisers, but I don't think it's that simple. . . . It is not the Presidents and their power which are corrupt, it is the people who sanction that power.

AMY GREENHUT
Ithaca, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . . The gross inequities of our system can still be alleviated, if not solved, by political measures. While many of the problems are technical, as Mr. Glazer states, there is much that our legislators could do and have left undone. Further, considering our enormous wealth, it is, I think, not correct to say that we spend proportionately the same amount on social welfare as other industrialized countries. . . .

The current increase in violence and "confrontations" from the Left will not create a revolution, as some leftists hope. . . . But it may provoke very ugly reactions from rightist elements and end up by causing our very imperfect democracy to come crashing down, only to be supplanted by a system certainly more coercive and probably even less sensitive to the needs of all the groups in our society.

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To The Editor of Commentary:

. . . Nathan Glazer's "The New Left & its Limits" might have been more accurately titled "The Political Exhaustion of the Old Left." Glazer is intelligently and fairly critical of the amalgam of sentiment and analysis typical of young New Leftists. Moreover, he does remind us that modern bureaucratic politics is universally complex. But he does not see that to stop with the "professionalization of reform" and the "end of ideology," in chorus with Daniel P. Moynihan and Daniel Bell, is to miss the essential political criticism of others. . . . The despair underlying Glazer's essay stems from the fact that with all their resources these men seem unable to map out or direct the political ends they once desired. It would be useful for a perceptive sociologist like Glazer to relate the emotional excesses (if they be such) of the New Left to the sense of policy futility (not complexity) that cloaks the words and actions of welfare liberals. Amidst the prodigious abundance of scientific research and skills, and notwithstanding the new status of policy intellectuals, something has gone radically wrong with welfare liberalism and the Democratic party that has governed its growth. . . .

Edgar Litt
Department of Political Science
University of Wisconsin
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Mr. Glazer writes:

Mr. Lapping convinces me, with his thoughtful letter, that I ought to be reading *Radical America*, among other things.

On power: Obviously power is important; I was criticizing exclusive emphasis on power, as against what one might do with it in the face of complex and intractable issues. Very often current Left criticism has attacked power holders without any concern for the situation of the power holder and how it might be changed. Thus there has been little detailed analysis of institutions and how they might be transformed—much less, my impression is, than twenty years ago when leftists or ex-leftists such as S. M. Lipset and Philip Selznick analyzed how democratic or socialist institutions might be prevented from becoming bureaucratic and undemocratic. In ignoring this tradition, stemming from Robert Michels, the current Left is to my mind "ahistorical"—it sees hope in new people, convulsive change, and a vague notion of "fundamental change," without analyzing what has happened to efforts to introduce fundamental change in the past.

On protest: I find Mr. Lapping's argument hard to follow—"the opportunity to protest is of little value if protest does not, in one way or another, alter the manipulation of power." How much "alteration" will be considered enough before the opportunity to protest is thrown aside in favor of stronger weapons? The arguments here are too classic even to bother rehearsing, but they are still strong: that, for example, the Right is as willing to go beyond protest as the Left, and that acceptable common rules as to the manner of changing democratic governments and their policies protect all of us from violence; and that a good deal of change in response to protest will be considered totally inadequate if one is Left enough—even the rise of the welfare states is easily interpreted by the current Left not as a triumph for democracy (and protest) that has created its own new problems, but simply as an attempt to prevent the unexplicated "revolution" that is still necessary. I would ask Mr. Lapping to review the road from Berkeley to Columbia, which of course has not yet come to an end, and consider whether the escalation of the right to protest to measures of force does not raise disturbing questions for anyone committed to democracy and civil liberty.

There is a good deal of truth in Mr. Lapping's truism—that riots lead to OEO projects, etc.—and that must concern all of us. But first of all there are boomerangs in this process—preventing Mr. Humphrey from speaking to public audiences (a common tactic used against more than Mr. Humphrey these days) may lead to sympathy for Mr. Humphrey; it certainly leads to license to the Right to do the same thing, and more than that, leads to a general atmosphere in which violence is expected and prepared for, and that might be a greater loss than the gains from OEO projects, reformed universities, and corrected Selective Service laws.

Finally, I am most bothered by the question of what one does on the basis of a judgment as to "corrupt and outmoded institutions." Everyone can make this judgment when it is understood that there

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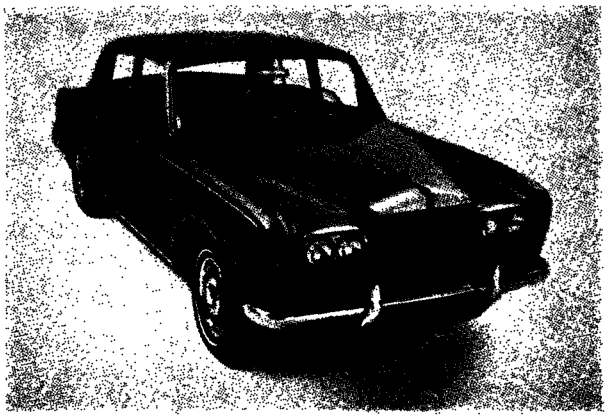

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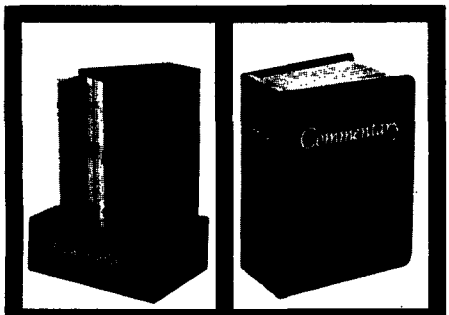

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are limits as to how one acts on the basis of it. But if self-righteous minorities not only make the judgment but then are convinced of their right to carry it out, to impose their will to the limits of their powers (fortunately at present small), then they may destroy a tolerable society, open to change, and find themselves in one intolerable and truly incapable of change except through force and violence. At this point, an exchange between Czechoslovak and Polish and American students might enlighten all of them on these matters.

Dialogue?

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a previously "silent Christian" whose position has been radically altered by participation in ecumenical activities with the Jewish community, I find the conclusion to Arthur A. Cohen's review of A. Roy Eckardt's *Elder and Younger Brothers* [June] most disturbing. Referring to the silence of official American Christendom during the Arab-Israeli War, Mr. Cohen concludes "that from the Jewish side this new epidemic of silence can only suggest the appropriateness, however temporary, of a disengagement from ecumenical conversation." It seems apparent that Mr. Cohen does not fully understand the implications of one of Mr. Eckardt's chief theses—that "the causes of silence lie deep in the Christian soul."

It is understandable that in evaluating Christian awareness or the lack of it, Mr. Cohen, speaking for the "Jewish side," would begin by viewing Christian reactions *vis-à-vis* the Jewish predicament. Admittedly, the Christian fares poorly in this situation. But Mr. Cohen would do well to evaluate the Christian reaction *vis-à-vis* the Christian predicament as well. Where was official American Christendom when the Christian Palestinian Arabs were in need? Where was official American Christendom when American Christian missionaries were slaughtered in Africa? Regardless of whether the situation finds Jew or Christian in peril, the fact remains that the Christian conscience has not been sufficiently aroused by social crises of any kind.

The causes of silence are twofold: stagnation . . . and lack of dynamism from within, and, externally, a dearth of concern for humanity. These weaknesses have not only eroded Jewish-Christian relations, but also adversely affected official Christian relationships with humanity at large.

Once we understand these causes, we can deal with them. The cure to the problem from within was prescribed at the Vatican Council, where renewal—now painfully but definitely taking place—was the key theme. The cure for the problem from without is to insure a continuing dialogue with those outside the "comfortable Christian majority," so that the Christian community can reawaken to the necessity of concern and awareness manifest in its doctrine. . . .

Jewish disengagement from ecumenical dialogue cannot be considered "appropriate," but rather catastrophic. For the Christian silence during the Six-Day War was not the fruit of too much dialogue, but of too little. Now more than ever before, the Jew must meet with the Christian in dialogue, and attempt to break down the prejudicial barriers which have marred our relations for so long.

I did not acquire my present attitude by having Jews retreat from me, although that too happened. But for the few who recoiled, many more accepted me and my attempt at dialogue, received me into their homes, synagogues, and community centers, and allowed me to observe and learn first hand. No other saying contains more truth than *"Der Goy is tsum goles nit gevoynt."* When we learn from dialogue, we have a chance to alter our position. If the opportunity is denied us, is it our fault if we don't?

JOHN CANGILOS

Albany, New York

MR. COHEN writes:

There was an unfortunate, but no less authentic, sternness, about the conclusion of my review of Eckardt's *Elder and Younger Brothers*. Mr. Cangilos is right to criticize it. On the other hand, there is a legitimate disinclination among Jews to assume responsibility for the reawakening of Christian conscience. Not that I believe the Jews are any the less beset (as a community) by moral sloth and torpor. We have no greater righteousness. It is only the saddening necessity which I feel that we must go our task alone—precisely as do the Negro in America, the blacks in South Africa, the Indians in Great Britain.

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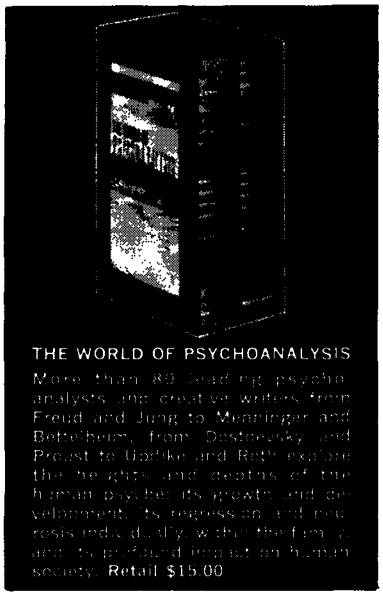

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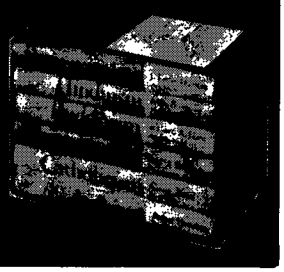

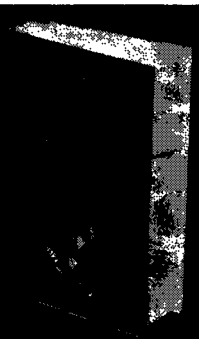

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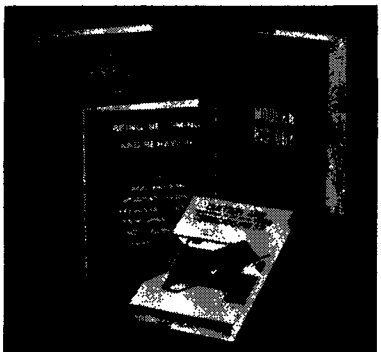

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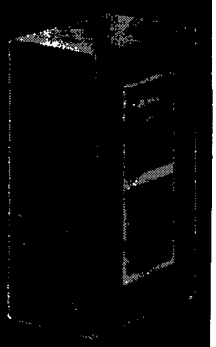

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Mr. Cangilos and others like him of strong good will must not despair if people like myself are less than enthusiastic about ecumenical dialogue. Let him simply strengthen his conviction that it is worth the energy and employ it.

The Future

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Nisbet's easy dismissal of recent efforts at forecasting cultural and technological trends ["The Year 2000 and All That," June] is a nice example of a theological refutation of a scientific argument.

It may be that Leibnizian assumptions as to a genetic relationship of past, present, and future in human history, as interpreted by Marx, Comte, or even Herman Kahn, are not empirically justified, but saying it doesn't make it so. Moreover, it is misleading to quote the authority of Durkheim as denying causality in history. In his *Rules of Sociological Method* Durkheim specifically postulated that "a given effect has always a single corresponding cause." It is true that in emphasizing his particular methodology he claimed that "one cannot explain a social fact of any complexity except by following its development through all social species." This is not to argue, however, as Professor Nisbet does, that the only social changes worth looking at are those emanating from "the Random Event, the Prophet, the Genius, and the Maniac."

Evidently Professor Nisbet is espousing a "Great Man theory" rather than an evolutionary theory of history, but a theory it is. The matter can be argued both ways perhaps but the only scientific test of the validity of forecasting theories developed *a posteriori* from historical insight is to apply them *a priori* and compare them at a later time with sociological, economic, and political data (the very "social facts" of Durkheim). Surely more light is cast by such systematic studies than by manifestoes proclaiming the causal priority of the Random Event.

MARTIN I. HOFFERT
Westbury, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While I agree with Professor Nisbet that demographers and similar predictors of the future have an inadequate view of the nature of history, I find his rejection of the (causal) continuity of history to be in no way a consequence of this, and, in fact, to be a highly misinformed historical doctrine. Surely the conclusions of the Rand Corporation and the Hudson Institute are liable to error: Leibniz would undoubtedly excoriate such agencies for examining the process of change phenomenally (i.e., functionally) instead of phenomenologically (i.e., substantially) as he advocated. One might add on Professor Nisbet's behalf that almost no one who has written on Leibnizian philosophy has understood the meaning of the law of continuity and that these same writers assume Leibniz had far more influence on subsequent philosophical developments than he actually did.

Implicit in any rejection of the continuity of history is a necessary rejection of real causality and of the utility of history itself. We can see the truth of the Leibnizian law of continuity and the reason Professor Nisbet fails to recognize its truth if we examine Professor Nisbet's position historically. There are two traditions in Enlightenment thought: on the one hand, the view exemplified by Bacon, Locke, and, with some reservations, Kant, which erases history (i.e., denies its utility to the extent of ignoring it) and ultimately (as in Hume), real causality. During the Enlightenment, this view regarded itself as original and without precedent or development. Subsequent research has of course revealed that it is a view first articulated by the Greek Stoics, and that it developed continuously through the medieval period and into the Enlightenment. It is far from dead today. On the other hand, there is the view exemplified by Leibniz and Hegel, which asserts the continuity of history and the operation of real causality. Leibniz and Hegel were led to this assertion because they perceived the genesis of their own view in medieval speculative mysticism, and, ultimately, in the philosophy of Plato. Mr. Nisbet's view, then, though it asserts that there is no historical structure, has itself a history: it is the result of a continuous process of historical development, which it fails to perceive because it has willfully erased it.

Mr. Nisbet's assertion of the chronological but not logical (or as he terms it, causal) nature of history is certainly much closer to the view of the Hudson Institute

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Principal Balance Sheet Items

	June 30, 1968	*June 30, 1967*
Assets	$1,540,719,000	$1,460,965,000
Deposits	1,318,012,000	1,285,720,000
Loans	967,633,000	857,867,000
Capital Funds	105,706,000	96,128,000

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and the Rand Corporation than to that of Leibniz.

JERRY H. BIEDERMAN
Palo Alto, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert A. Nisbet should learn a little elementary physics before discussing the "Leibnizian law of continuity." The followers of Isaac Newton knew what they were talking about when they said that a knowledge of the position and velocity of every particle at one instant would suffice to predict the future completely. Their statement was not based upon unsupported declarations of belief, or appeals to authority (Emile Durkheim), as is Mr. Nisbet's entire article. Rather, the statement was a perfectly valid consequence of Newtonian physics, and, most scientists would agree, remains true today (with certain modifications in interpretation due to the quantum theory).

Of course one can never know the status of every particle in the universe, and so a practical application of the deterministic principle is impossible, as Laplace knew and as Kahn knows. Equally true, a partial knowledge of the present yields a partial knowledge of the future. So the future-predictors cannot be criticized on principle. It may be true that their predictions are incorrect, misleading, or vapid, but surely nothing has been learned by the publication of Mr. Nisbet's polemic.

MICHAEL I. SOBEL
Atomic Energy
Research Establishment
Harwell, Berkshire
England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Permit me to offer a few comments on issues involving social science, the present "culture of technology," and types of oracles, raised by Mr. Nisbet.

First, there is the current ritual formula which says that a science consists of a series of observations, analyses, clarifications, and deductions followed finally by prediction and control. Modern social science is still felt to be only "half-science" presumably because of its infertility in the last two respects. The argument could, however, well be made that *claims* to prediction and control about the social world would increasingly serve little purpose, since there are so many of us wary of the effects either of current "public opinion," or propaganda, or both. Robert Lynd's famous "knowledge for what?" may now raise the further question "prediction for whom?" Since this question is asked so indecisively, no wonder so much of the prediction turns out to be a hodge-podge of gadgetry, rates, and trends. . . .

Second, extrapolations from 1968 should make us acutely aware of the contradictions inherent in our present "culture of technology." Vietnam, the current "problem," is often approached symptomatically as if deserving of a more *efficient* terrorism by hawk-types, or of an increasing reservoir for applying *quantitative* do-gooding by dove-types. Millenarian projections based on the present culture of technology may be binding the futurized present to narrow commitments of technicism or indiscriminate applications of accumulationism (funneled out with little concern for special conditions).

Third, there are interesting comparisons between the old temple oracles and the new intellectual forecasters. Armed with punch-card jargon, the forecasters talk about feedback, or even, feedback loop. What they lack, however, is the old temple oracles' special "zero-in" to what may be called "problems of backfire." The distinction between predicting an event and the specific train of circumstances leading to such is also relevant. If Professor Nisbet finds the "train of circumstances" more exciting, let us remember that the old temple oracles refrained from this type of prediction. One possible point of similarity between oracles and forecasters, between Delphi and a think-tank, is the fact that consultants stand outside the outcomes which they predict. . . . So far as I know, a reconciliation of the oracular and non-oracular stances is still needed. . . .

NEVILLE W. LAYNE
Department of Sociology
University of California
Riverside, California

MR. NISBET writes:

Theology and science are hardly relevant to the issues posed by my article. What I called into question was not causality (which I believe in to the approximate lim-

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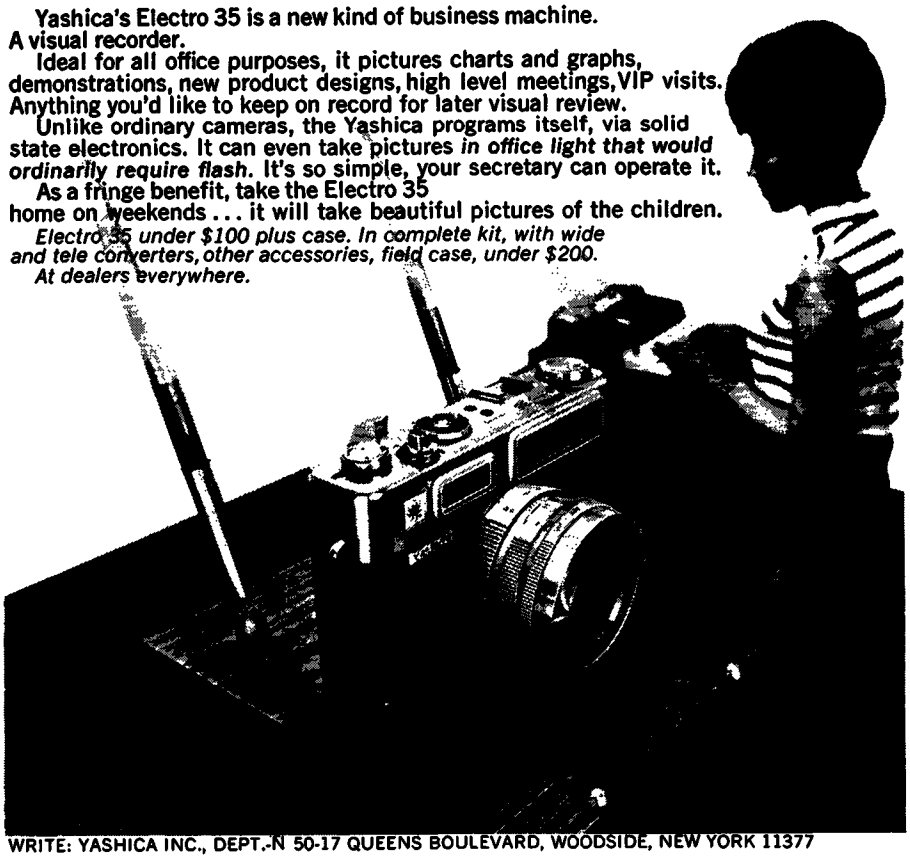

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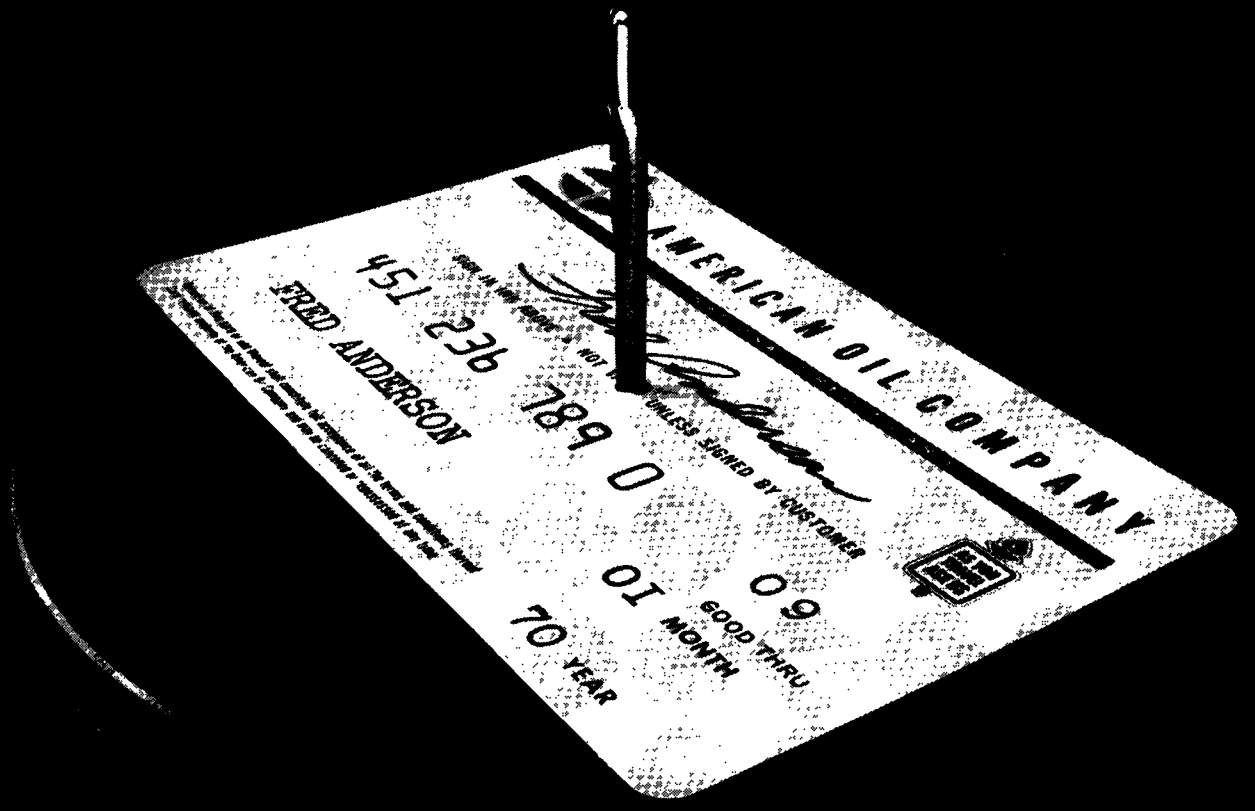

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its set by David Hume) but asserted genetic linkages of events and changes masquerading as linear casuality in time. Growth-models are excellent when there are in fact entities, real entities, to which concept-derivations of growth may be applied. But boneless abstractions such as "civilization," "democracy," "capitalism," however useful as terms of aggregation in ordinary conversation or writing, hardly advance the scientific study of change when what we are concerned with, and have to be concerned with, is the problem: *under what circumstances do changes in the social behavior of human beings (and I am talking about significant and visible changes) take place in finite time and in concrete areas?* I regard all other formulations of the problem as metaphoric, religious, or haruspicial, which doesn't mean of course that they can't be fun. Mr. Hoffert will find his difficulties with Durkheim resolved by the latter's discussion of *social milieu* in the final pages of Chapter 5, *The Rules of Sociological Method.*

Regarding Mr. Biederman's letter, I don't know what Leibniz's influence proved to be on philosophy strictly defined. But the lift he gave the apothegm "Nature never makes leaps" (which Leibniz expressly called his Law of Continuity in the study of change) proved sufficient to reach Auguste Comte and Charles Darwin, both of whom cited it as the conceptual rock on which their respective theories of change in time were founded; and, I would, guess, also Karl Marx, judging from his insistence in *Capital* that no society can "clear by bold leaps . . . the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development." Comte, Darwin, Marx! That's not bad influencing.

To say that rejection of the continuity of history is rejection of real causality seems to me to fly in the face of everything we have known about causality since Hume. Causality, as this word is used in non-theological contexts at least, has no more to do with the continuity of history than its discontinuity.

As to the two traditions that Mr. Biederman describes, somewhat confusedly, I am no more impressed by this statement (and it is standard in the literature) with respect to the Enlightenment than any other age in European thought. In any event, I belong to neither. I accept history, adore change, believe in the existential reality of both, but deny that the scientific study of either is advanced by quasi-theological beliefs in immanence, developmental continuity, and, above all, the linkage of causality and the continuity of history. If Mr. Biederman wants to consider two traditions that have *really* mattered, I recommend his reading Frederick J. Teggart's *Theory of History* (1926), one of the most original and profound works of this century on the study of historical change.

May I set Mr. Sobel correct: Not Newtonian (or Leibnizian) physics but teleological biology, panpsychism, and, above all, an indwelling God were the vital premises of the Law of Continuity. Later generations used the Law but forgot the premises. And if there is one point in my "polemic" that stays with Mr. Sobel, I hope it is the irrelevance of physics, elementary or advanced, to the study of change in human culture. Two centuries have passed since the misguided work of the 18th-century social physicists, but quite evidently we aren't out of the woods yet.

To Mr. Layne's thoughtful exploration of issues suggested by my article I can only say amen. I would add this point, however: Prophecy serves, and will always serve, deep human needs; for the uncertainties of life do not diminish; they only change their tenor and level. Prophecy, like magic, can serve an integrative as well as ritual function. Neither, however, as Mr. Layne sees clearly, should be confused with science and with prediction. After all, as Malinowski has told us, primitive man didn't confuse them!

Correction

To the Editor of Commentary:

I hope you will allow me to correct two rather disastrous typographical errors in my review of F.R. Leavis's *Anna Karenina and other Essays* [July]. On page 85, for "the narrow force of the obstruction" read *in*struction; on page 86, for "with the political commitment to the Left" read *without.*

Frank Kermode

New Brunswick, New Jersey

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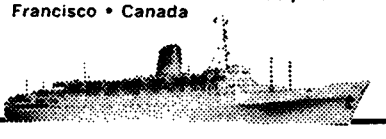

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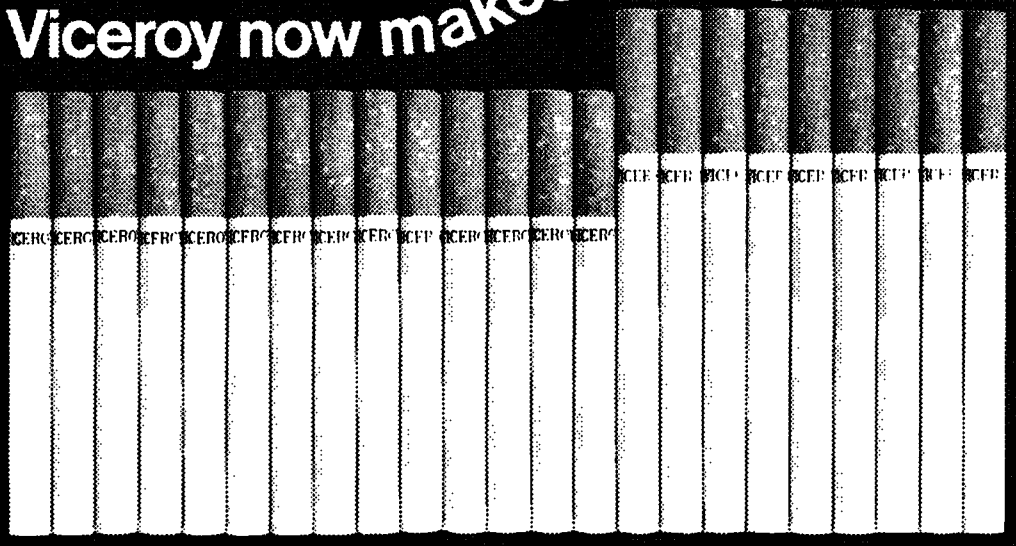

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The Psalms in Translation

Mitchell Dahood
Milton Himmelfarb

The following exchange was occasioned by MILTON HIMMELFARB's *article, "Translating the Psalms," which appeared in the February* COMMENTARY. MITCHELL DAHOOD, S. J. *is professor of Ugaritic Language and Literature at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, and author of a number of works of biblical scholarship. Mr. Himmelfarb is one of our contributing editors. (For technical reasons, it has been necessary to omit diacritical markings from the transliterations which appear in this exchange.)*

Mitchell Dahood

The peoples will praise you, O God. . . . —Psalm 67:3

A FORMER COLLEAGUE, while a student at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, attended a seminar on comparative Semitic philology. One day when a Jewish student was holding forth in the seminar, my former colleague questioned his explanation of an Akkadian usage, and later during the same hour he challenged his parsing of a construction in Hebrew. This was too much. With a look and a gesture of utter exasperation, the Jewish student sighed: "First you questioned my knowledge of Akkadian, and now you're trying to tell me I don't know any Hebrew!"

That Milton Himmelfarb should put a similar interpretation on my *Psalms I* (Volume 16 of the Anchor Bible, Doubleday, 1966) does not surprise me because, after all, it does challenge, verse after verse, the traditional Jewish—and Christian—translation and interpretation of the Hebrew Psalter. What does amaze me is that the cudgels were taken up, and on a largely philological basis, by one who is innocent of Ugaritic and Phoenician and is unfamiliar with the scientific literature and trends in the field of Northwest Semitic (Hebrew, Ugaritic, Phoenician). Especially since the second paragraph of the Introduction to *Psalms I* contains the following programmatic statement: "But the translation offered here differs from earlier efforts in that it is not the fruit of a confrontation of the Hebrew text from which the least objectionable reading is plucked. . . . What is attempted here is a fresh translation, accompanied by a philological commentary, that lays heavy stress on the Ras Shamra-Ugarit texts and other epigraphic discoveries made along the Phoenician littoral." In seeking fairly to appraise *Psalms I* according to its aims and its methodology, the reviewer should be conversant with the cognate dialects appealed to in order to solve syntactic and lexical difficulties that swarm in the Hebrew Psalter. Lacking this conversance, he is apt to distort the book under review and to mislead the reader. For an illustration of this danger, one need but compare Himmelfarb's article "Translating the Psalms" with the lengthy review of *Psalms I* in the Israeli newspaper *Ha-Aretz* (August 12, 1966) by Professor M. Goshen-Gottstein of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the director of the Hebrew Bible project, and a professional Semitist with an enviable command of Northwest Semitic philology. But let that pass. In his article Himmelfarb has raised several valid questions which should be met.

WHAT NEW DISCOVERIES PERMIT, nay, oblige a biblical scholar to say to tradition that it has not done full justice to the syntactic, lexical, and theological treasures of the Psalms? Over the past forty years biblical research has been affected by numerous archaeological and epigraphic discoveries, but pride of place belongs to those made at the mound of Ras Shamra, the ancient city of Ugarit, seven miles north of Latakia on the coast of Northern Syria. Since 1929 thirty archaeological campaigns under the direction of Monsieur C. F. A. Schaeffer have uncovered hundreds of baked clay tablets that were written or copied between *circa* 1375-1185 B.C.E. (the Israelites entered Palestine, it might be noted, *circa* 1250-1225 B.C.E.). Many of these tablets are written in a dialect closely akin to biblical Hebrew. They preserve some long mythological poems of the Canaanites, the perennial adversaries of the Israelites, economic and juridical texts, royal letters, and the correspondence of private individuals.

What emerges from forty years' study of these tablets with their various poetic and prose genres is the sharp difference between the syntax of poetry and the syntax of prose (also observable in many modern languages, such as French). Classic Hebrew grammars have generally slighted this distinction, with the unfortunate result that biblical poetry has been translated and parsed according to canons of biblical prose, and if a poetic verse proved refractory, its obstinacy was chastised by emendation or expulsion from the text. Thus Moses Buttenwieser, *The*

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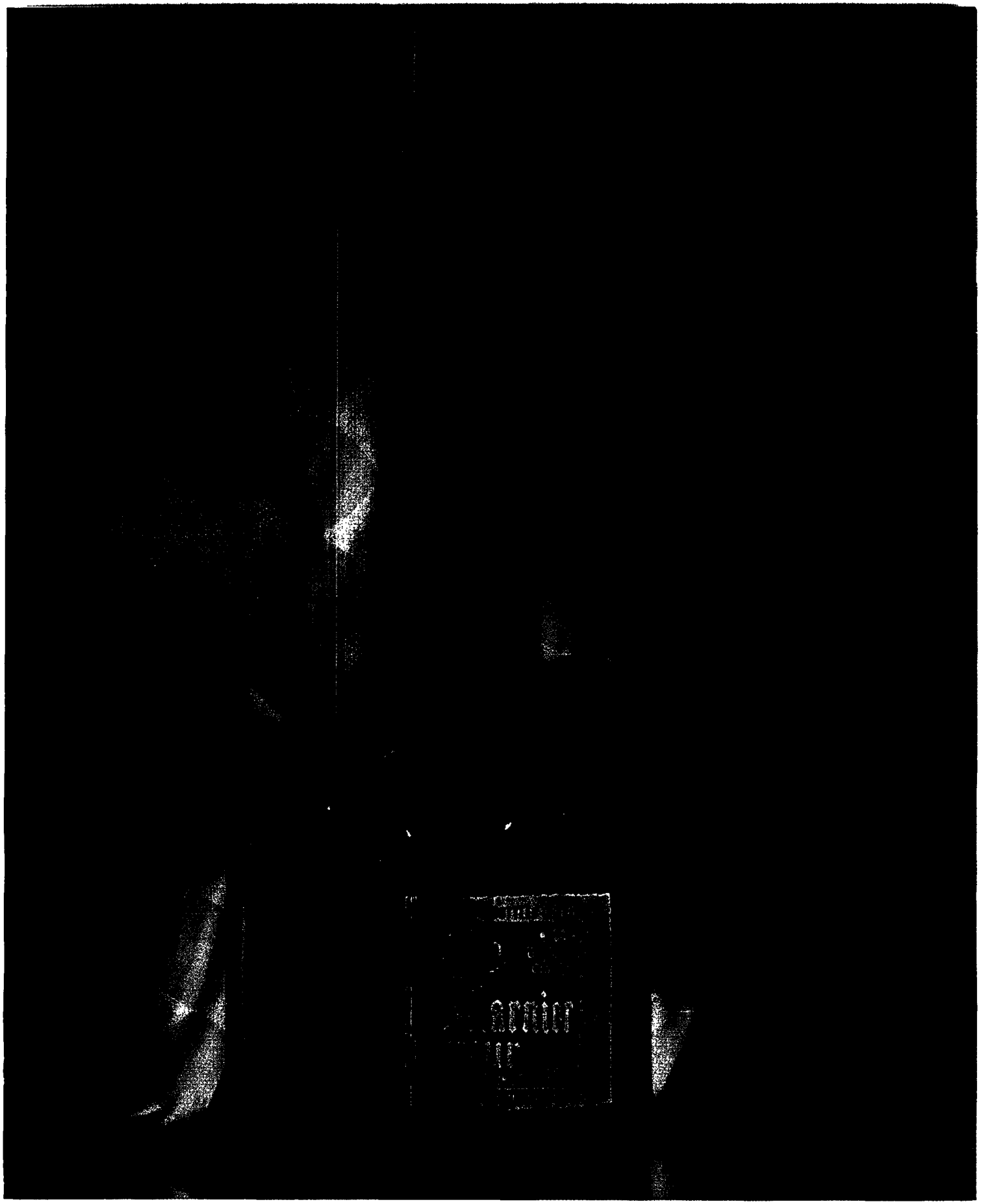

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Psalms (Chicago, 1938), writes: "It should be emphasized that there neither is nor can be any exception to the rule that the genitive cannot be separated from the *nomen regens* by a pronominal suffix." This apodictic statement has been dynamited sky-high by numerous Northwest Semitic examples of pronominal suffixes, enclitic particles, even verbs, interposed between the construct noun and the genitive. Classic and rabbinic Hebrew grammars teach that the *qtl* or perfect form expresses past time, while the *yqtl* or imperfect verb states present or future activity. But much to the surprise of comparative Semitic philologists, the Ugaritic texts regularly employ the *yqtl* or imperfect verb to describe past happenings, while the *qtl* forms serve mainly as stylistic variants to the *yqtl*, or are usually limited to intransitive verbs. When translating biblical poetry (roughly one third of the Old Testament), should we continue to follow the teaching of the pre-Ugaritic grammarians, or should we cut free and study Hebrew poetry within the wider context of Northwest Semitic poetry where *yqtl* ordinarily expresses the narrative past? The well-documented use of the optative or precative perfect in Ugaritic and Phoenician (as well as in Arabic) reveals that very many perfect verbs in the Psalter, especially when paired with imperatives or jussive verbs, are precative forms expressing a wish or a prayer and not stating a past event. Of course, this insight will affect the literary classification of some poems. Some Psalms that were thought to be hymns of thanksgiving now turn out to be prayers for rain! For example, Psalms 65b, 67, 85.

These and many other points of Hebrew poetic syntax and style have been put into a clear light by the Ugaritic tablets, but Mr. Himmelfarb, with no credentials in Northwest Semitic philology, cannot be expected to know these things and so must continue in his stodginess (his term), emending the text (see his treatment of Psalms 2:11-12) or falling back on its interpretation in the Jewish liturgy.

Unfortunately for him, progress in Northwest Semitic philology renders emendation ever more doubtful as a text-critical procedure. Dramatic illustration of this is offered by the recently published *Hebraisches und Aramaisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament* by W. Baumgartner, with the collaboration of B. Hartmann and E. Y. Kutscher. Exploiting more fully the Ugaritic lexical and syntactic thesaurus, these lexicographers have reduced by roughly sixty per cent the emendations which vitiated the first edition of 1953 and the partial revision of 1958.

ADVANCES IN Ugaritic research also result in the devaluation of the ancient versions. For example, the simple letter *l* can symbolize four different particles: the negative "not, no," the emphasizing *lamedh* "surely," vocative "O," and finally the preposition "to" but also "from." The observation that the ancient versions, generally speaking, lumped all four particles together and translated them as though they all signified "to," does not speak well for their knowledge of Hebrew. And one must exercise caution when handling the Qumran or Dead Sea Scrolls. In the large Isaiah Scroll alone the monks of Qumran edited five enclitic *mems* out of the text, evidently because they did not appreciate their function. Consult, for instance, Isaiah 30:20 *mym lhs*, to be pointed *mey-m lahas*, "waters of affliction," which appears in Qumran Isaiah as *my lhs*, without the enclitic *mem* interposed in the construct chain. Thanks to the numerous examples of this enclitic *mem* in Ugaritic, biblical scholars have been able to identify it in some two hundred passages in the Old Testament. Before the Ras Shamra discoveries its presence in the Hebrew text went unrecognized.

To be sure, the sudden irruption onto the page of Hebrew poetry of so many new particles, words, verb forms, and syntactic phenomena will doubtless bewilder one not schooled in Ugaritic grammar and style. A long and thorough familiarity with Ugaritic poetic usage will, however, supply the Bible translator with the criteria to decide when, say, a simple *l* should be interpreted as vocative "O" and not prepositional "to." With practice the translator's hand acquires a sureness that hardly seemed possible when first he learned that a simple *l* was susceptible to four or five interpretations. I frankly conceded in the Introduction to *Psalms I* (p. XX) that "not all the proposals submitted here will stand the test of present criticism or future discoveries," and "to claim that the present application of this new information to the biblical text is judicious in every instance would be patently absurd" (p. XLII). But the growing acceptance of this new methodology on the part of Hebrew philologists has speeded up the tempo of research along Northwest Semitic lines, providing the translator with more data on which to base his choices. That the consensus (pardon the word) is growing can be gathered from the above mentioned *Hebraisches und Aramaisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament*, which differs most strikingly from its predecessors in its fuller exploitation of the Ugaritic tablets and of studies on Ugaritic-Hebrew relationships. "It is equally significant," one scholar has observed, "that neither Baumgartner nor any of his collaborators and consultors, who include the leading Semitists, can be accused of pan-Canaanite tendencies in the past."

But what effect has this philological onrush had on Mr. Himmelfarb? Basically one of irritation and frustration, even though he is, as he assures us, an equable sort. But this may be taken as a hopeful sign, because the process of education often causes irritation and frustration in the learner, but the supple mind will not permit this aggravation to blind it to the basic question: "Is this educational process valid?"

About a year ago, I received a letter from a Biblical scholar, who concerning the method employed by *Psalms I*, wrote: "Scholars just don't believe it, and several of my colleagues just dismiss it as far-fetched. I hope you will not be discouraged by this. . . . The proof of the pudding for me is that it clarifies things elsewhere—that's real control. For example: I simply did not buy your claim that *'amaru*, 'to *see*' [this is its meaning in Ugaritic; in Hebrew it signifies 'to say'] exist-

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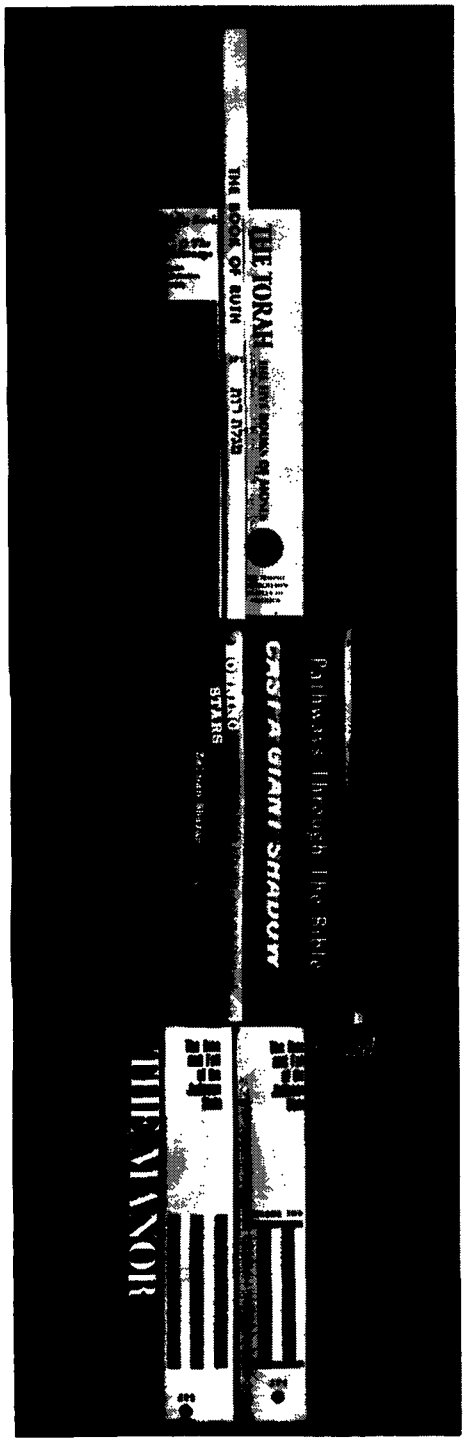

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ed in Hebrew, until I came upon a place where 'said' didn't make sense but 'see' did! I was converted. We've just got to allow time for the stuff to sink in." For all his high dudgeon, Himmelfarb does give some evidence (cf. his remarks on Psalm 22:26) that he too, after further research, will be converted, will begin *'amaru*, "to see."

HE LAUNCHES, though, the discussion with an unfelicitous comparison of *Psalms I* with E. A. Speiser's *Genesis* (Vol. 1 of Anchor Bible) that obscures the fact that Psalms and Genesis present two different sets of problems. The avowed method of the Anchor Bible is "to arrive at the meaning of biblical literature through exact translation and extended exposition. . . . The Anchor Bible is an effort to make available all the significant historical and *linguistic* [my italics] knowledge which bears on the biblical record" (see the page opposite the title page of *Genesis* and *Psalms I*). Now the Book of Genesis is essentially a prose narrative whose well-preserved text presents the translator with relatively few text-critical problems; the translator and commentator can thus concentrate on extended exposition and historical background. This Speiser has done magisterially, so that his *Genesis* makes pleasurable reading. Psalms, on the contrary, are poems with no identifiable historical background, whose text bristles with rare poetic words and textual problems, problems which have often been compounded by the Masoretes. Before the commentator on Psalms can begin to discuss the *Sitz im Leben* of a Psalm, he must first determine the literal meaning of each verse, determining what is the subject, what is the predicate, what is the object. Banalities, one might retort, but none the less necessary if progress is to be made in Psalms research.

The shortcomings of the Masoretes, it has been noted, have compounded in many passages the task of the critic. For example, the MT reads at Psalm 49:16 (15), *'ak elohim yipdeh napsi miyyad se'ol //ki yiqqaheni*, faithfully reproduced by the Jewish Publication Society Version: "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the nether-world; For He shall receive me." Both MT and JPSV divide an eight-word line into a six-word first colon (with twelve syllables) and a two-word (with five syllables) second colon. Where did they go wrong? In failing to recognize that the seventh word, *ki*, is not the conjunction "for" but rather the emphatic particle *ki*, "surely," that often causes the verb (here *yiqqaheni*) to be thrown to the end of the colon. This usage was first illustrated by the Ugaritic texts where six examples have been identified. Thus the eight-word line should be scanned into two four-word cola with an 8:9 syllable count. The parallel elements now stand out clearly: *'ak//ki; 'elōhim//miyyad še'ol; yipdeh napši//yiqqaheni*. Hence translate, "But God will ransom my soul// From the hand of Sheol will he surely snatch me." In fulfilling his primary function, the commentator on Psalms must employ discourse that becomes irritatingly philological, but on that account no less necessary. The interested reader has a right to the evidence behind a new version.

When reading Himmelfarb's presentation of my views, I rubbed my eyes in disbelief. He ascribes to me, for instance, this credo: "The day of the Bible scholar not expert in Ugaritic is past, particularly if he specializes in such books as Psalms and Job. *Only* [my italics] Ugaritic can help with those books, because even the Septuagint, the most ancient version, no longer understands their Canaanite archaisms—of vocabularly, grammar, style, imagery, and the rest. Of course, the Masoretes don't understand either since they're later still. . . ." But then the suspicion crossed my mind that he is jesting. This suspicion proved correct, because in the very next paragraph he faults me for occasionally recurring to the Septuagint and the Vulgate (Himmelfarb's remark about my Catholic priesthood and its bearing on my attitude toward the Vulgate is beneath comment). The jest becomes full-blown in the subsequent paragraph where he upbraids me for appealing to the existence in Hebrew of the third-person singular suffix *i*, which is characteristic of Phoenician morphology. Himmelfarb is much too intelligent not to know the difference between Ugaritic and Phoenician, so that when he chides my appeal to a Phoenician phenomenon to explain some ninety passages in the Psalter, he cannot seriously ascribe to me the view that *only* Ugaritic can help with Psalms and Job. It would be interesting to have his views on M. Pope's *Job* in the Anchor Bible.

WHEN HE ASKS why we should insist that thunder *bašamayim*, "in the sky," should be "from the sky," since to him there isn't much perceptible difference, the answer must be that the Psalmists sensed a difference, and the serious philologist must respect this difference. Thus Psalm 18:14 states that the LORD thundered *bašamayim*, whereas the later recension of this verse in II Samuel 22:14 reads *min šamayim* "from heaven." Textual critics today agree that *bassamayim* is the original reading, and that its meaning is "from heaven." Or, again, the Psalmist (119:87)

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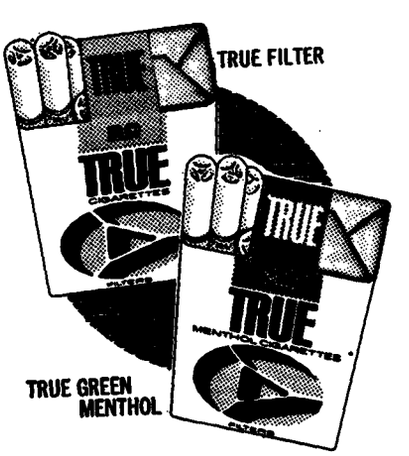
Born in 1867, Lillian decided early in her life that she wanted to help people. Accordingly, she took nurses' training at the New York Training School for Nursing. Appalled by the dreadful conditions then prevalent among the immigrant population of the Lower East Side, Miss Wald and another nurse, Mary Brewster, established a nursing and sanitation service for the underprivileged, using their own apartment as headquarters. This service grew and ultimately became the Visiting Nurses' Service, which continues to furnish assistance to the needy sick in their homes today.

In 1885 Lillian Wald established the Henry Street Settlement House—originally called the Nurses' Settlement—with the assistance of the well-known philanthropist, Jacob H. Schiff. To this haven for the bewildered and friendless came streams of immigrants. To the children she was mother, friend and defender. Through her efforts, classes for ungraded children were first established in the New York City schools. To the adults, strangers in a new land, she was friend, counsellor and teacher, for, in addition to the visiting nurses' service, Lillian made available social activities and education.

Lillian Wald's advocacy resulted in the creation of the Federal Children's Bureau in 1912, a landmark in social service. Her 70th birthday was celebrated nationally. Her death, in 1940, evoked tributes from the leading figures in the United States. Her life, however, is her true monument.



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confesses that "They virtually exterminated me *from the earth*, but I did not abandon your precepts." The Hebrew texts reads ambivalent *ba'ares*, "upon/from the earth," but some monk of Qumran, intuiting that the context desiderated "from the earth," but not knowing that *ba* also denoted "from," changed *b'rs* to *m'rs* (11QPs). The revolution in the understanding of prepositions brought on by Ugaritic liberates the modern Hebraist from the need for such gratuitous emendations, and upsets the *a priori* position of Himmelfarb: "I find it hard to believe that so many prepositions have to mean 'from' quite so often—not only the one we always knew meant 'from,' but also those we thought meant 'to' and 'in' and 'on'." It would be cruel but educative to refer Himmelfarb, who takes a restrictive view of *min*, to Speiser's *Genesis*, p. 16, where the note to Genesis 2:8, *miqqedem*, reads: "*in the east*. Not 'from'; the preposition (Heb. *min*) is not only partitive but also locative." Among the new entries in the above-mentioned *Hebraisches Lexikon* is *b*, described as "often denoting 'from'" (p. 101a).

The difference in methodology is equally apparent at the famous crux in Psalm 2:11-12, *nassequ bar*, traditionally rendered "Kiss the son!" What I propose in *Psalms I* is an original text employing Phoenician or defective spelling, hence the consonants *nšqbr*, which I vocalize as *neše qeber*, mortal men," literally "men of the grave." Himmelfarb wants to know what happened to the *waw* of MT *nšqw*; the simple reply is that it was never there in the purely consonantal text. And then he proceeds to unfold his total unfamiliarity with Phoenician orthography by assuming that "mortal men" should be written *nšy qbr*. Not at all. The final syllable *-e* of *nese* is graphically zero in Phoenician spelling. Unwilling to accept the new proposal, Himmelfarb falls back upon the emendation, suggested by A. Bertholet at the beginning of the century, which involves "a minimum of rearrangement and the loss of only one *w*," and leads to the version "with trembling kiss His [sc. the Lord's] feet." This solution he finds "neat, economical, and satisfactory." But is it correct? That remains the vital question, and progress in Northwest Semitic philology casts ever greater doubts on textual emendation (namely a change of consonants) as a valid procedure, even when the result is "neat, economical, and satisfactory." Since our knowledge of Hebrew vocabulary and syntax is daily increasing through new epigraphic discoveries, the destruction of the evidence by emendation and rearrangement can rarely be countenanced.

Somewhat amusing is Himmelfarb's flat statement "Dahood is wrong," as regards *nazkir*, "we are strong," in Psalm 20:8 (7), "Some through chariots, and others through horses, but we through the Name of our God are strong." His etymological reasoning namely that *zakar* has only a biological sense "male," appears unfaultable, but modern lexicographers do not base their definitions on etymology alone; usage is equally important. He emphatically states that "in the whole Bible no form of *hizkir* suggests the meaning 'to be male'," but he fails to mention Nahum 2:5-6 (cited in *Psalms I*, p. 129), "The chariots rage in the streets, they rush to and fro through the squares. They gleam like torches, they dart like lightning. The officers *yzkr*, they hurtle in their march, they hasten to the wall, the mantelet is set up." In this context of careening chariots and charging soldiers, *yzkr* makes no sense as "remember," but "are strong" fits. Hence vocalize *yazkiru*. The new edition of the *Hebraisches Lexikon* deems *hizkir*, "to be strong," worthy of entry (p. LII), and also explains *hit'ošasu*, "show yourselves men," in Isaiah 46:8 as a denominative verb (p. 97b) from *'is*, "man, male," which like *zakar* emphasizes the anatomical rather than qualities of courage or strength.

ONE CAN sympathize with Himmelfarb's puzzlement in the presence of the new verbal theory forced upon the Hebraist by the use of the verb forms in Ugaritic. When should the *yqtl* or imperfect verb be rendered as future, and when should it be understood as narrating past events? Is this *qtl* or perfect form in the indicative mode, or is it precative to be translated as a prayer? Is this *yaqtulu* verb third person plural or is it an archaic singular form whose final syllable has been preserved to bring the syllable count of the respective cola into equilibrium? An answer to these questions is not possible in the abstract. But no matter. As Himmelfarb rightly observes, "We don't normally read isolated words, we read sentences or words in a context. Without a sentence or a context, vowels don't always help: taken by itself, what exactly does *sound* mean?" One conversant with the older Canaanite poetry, with the biblically contemporary Phoenician inscriptions, and with Hebrew poetry itself normally need not rack his brain deciding whether a *qtl* or perfect verb is indicative or precative. Consider, for instance, Psalm 4:2, *beqor'i 'aneni 'elohe sidqi bassar hirhabta li honneni usema' tepillati*, "When I call, answer me, O God of my vindacation; in my distress, set me at large; have pity on me and hear my prayer." How must one translate the perfect verb *hirhabta*, here rendered "set me at large?" JPSV reads "Thou who didst set me free." Most commentators emend it to the imperative *harhibah*, "set me at large," because of the three parallel imperatives in the verse. But why emend the text when perfect *hirhabta* can be explained as precative, employed by the Psalmist as a stylistic variant to the imperative in order to eschew monotony? After all, four successive imperatives would be a bit much. The precative mode, well known from Arabic, and now sufficiently documented in Ugaritic and Phoenician, must still find its rightful place in standard Hebrew grammars. What emerges from the study of biblical poetry within the larger ambience of Northwest Semitic is that Hebrew grammars in the future must describe the linguistic phenomena actually present in the text of the Old Testament, and not the converse, namely that the text be emended into line (as in Psalm 4:2) with superseded grammatical notions enshrined in grammars composed a century ago and mindlessly recopied today.

Or again, how does one distin-

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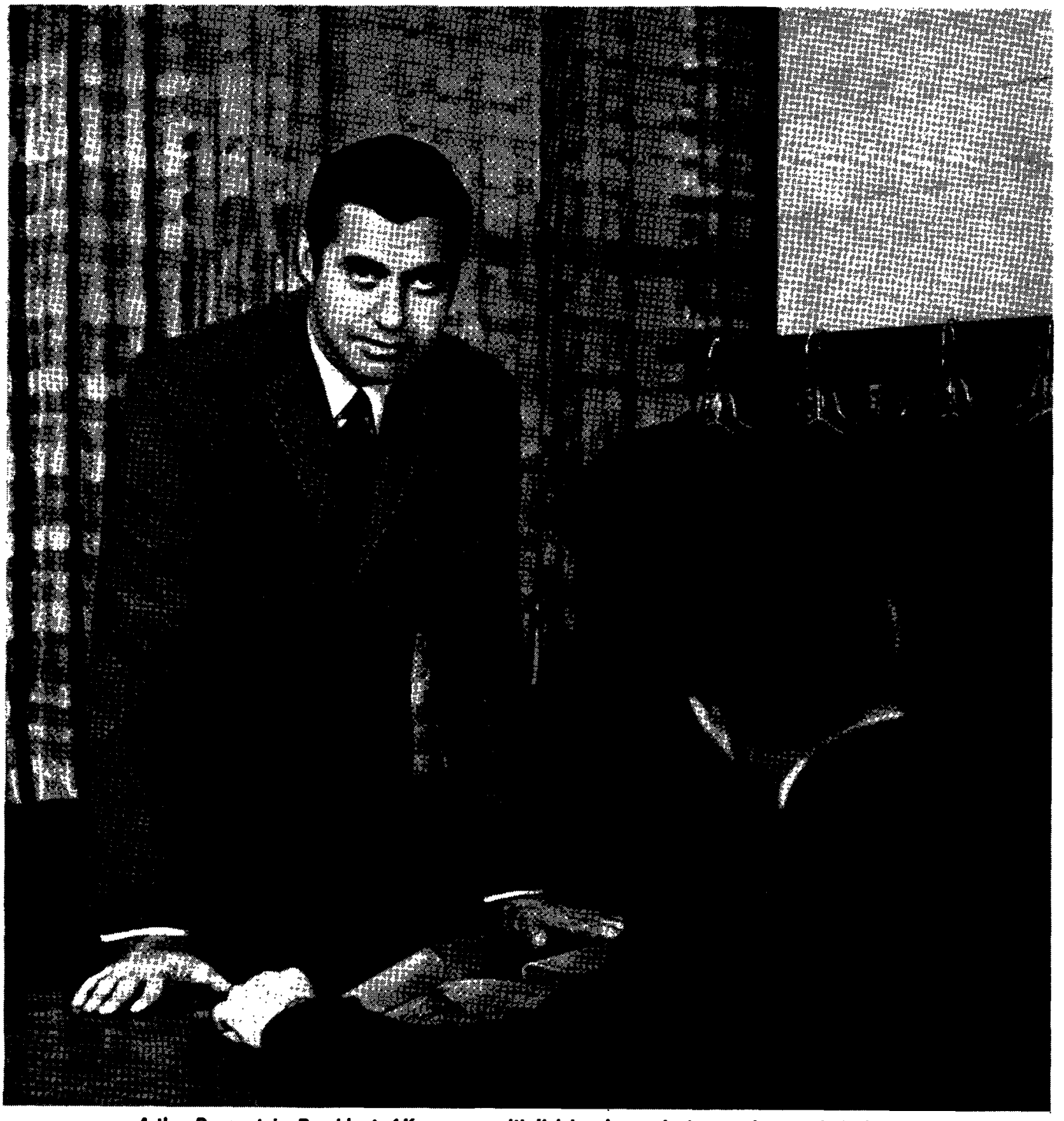

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guish between the first person singular suffix *-i* and the third person singular suffix, also written *-i*? Theoretically very confusing, to be sure, but contextually not an unmanageable problem. Who doubts that Psalm 24:4 means "The clean of hands and pure of heart, who has not raised his mind (*napši*) to an idol"? The third person singular verb *nasa'*, "raised," calls for a corresponding third person suffix in MT *napši*, which according to the grammars is furnished with the first person singular suffix. What to do? The accepted procedure hitherto has been to alter *napši* to *napšo*, "his mind." Few would question the occasional orthographic confusion between *w* and y (cf. Qumran Scrolls), but when this emendatory procedure must be applied to more than two hundred Biblical forms, it becomes self-defeating. Why not admit a new morpheme into Hebrew, given that *-y* was the normal third person singular suffix in the cognate Phoenician dialect, a morpheme also present in Ugaritic (see below)? In Hebrew the normal third singular suffix remains *-o, with -i* an optional surrogate to meet the needs of variety imposed by the parallelistic structure of biblical poetry.

The objections to my translation of Psalm 29:1, *bene 'elim*, "gods," should not be addressed to me but to the Psalmist. Had he wished to write "angels" or "heavenly beings," he would have done so; he had at least three words at his command to express such ideas: *mal'akim*, *qedošim*, and *seba'ot*. Instead he cruelly saddles us with "gods" and there is nothing a scientific translator can do about it. And what is so dreadful about admitting "gods" into the Psalter? What about the divine title *'el 'elohim*, "God of gods"? Compare Psalm 138:1, faithfully reproduced by RSV, "I give thee thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods (*'elohim*) I sing thy praise," but tendentiously turned in JPSV, "I will give Thee thanks with my whole heart, in the presence of the mighty will I sing praises unto Thee." Had the Psalmist wished to say "the mighty," he probably would have used *gibborim*, *'addirim* or something similar, not *'elohim*, "gods."

As STATED ABOVE, the Ugaritic clay tablets date to the period circa 1375–1185 B.C.E. Some of the mythological poems preserved on the tablets were, however, composed several centuries earlier. Several reviewers of *Psalms I* have expressed their uneasiness *vis à vis* the chronological gap subsisting between the Canaanite poems and biblical verse. The oldest poems in the Bible, it will be recalled, belong to the 13th-12th centuries B.C.E. (the Song of Miriam in Exodus 15 and the Song of Deborah in Judges 5). One reviewer puts the problem this way: "Moreover, ancient Ugarit was destroyed in the 13th century B.C., and the epic texts which Dahood uses were probably composed at least by the 15th century. No direct dependence is thinkable." As I try to explain in the Introduction to *Psalms II* (Vol. 17 of the Anchor Bible, Doubleday, 1968), it is not so much a relationship of dependence as of mutual elucidation, so that in a certain sense chronological considerations assume a secondary importance. The Ugaritic texts, in particular the poetry, contain grammatical, lexical, or stylistic phenomena always present in the Hebrew Bible but for one reason or another unrecognized or unappreciated. The poetic use of the double-duty suffix may serve as illustration. In 1948 Professor G. R. Driver of Oxford published an article showing that the Canaanite poets of Ugarit employed, for metrical or other reasons, but one suffix where sense and syntax require two. Thus the poet writes, *špsg ysk lriš hrs lzr qdqdy*, "Glaze will be poured on his head, plaster upon his pate," where the third person suffix of *qdqdy*, "his pate," also modifies suffixless *riš*, which should be rendered "his head." Driver transferred this information to the biblical text and identified some dozen examples of this practice. In the interim the number of dual-purpose suffixes has risen well above three hundred. This poetic usage has been always materially present in the Old Testament, but the appearance of the phenomenon in the Ugaritic poems was needed to trigger its recognition in the Bible. In Hermann Gunkel's justly famous commentary on the Psalms (1926), one often encounters statements similar to his annotation on Psalm 89:3, where suffixless *hesed* balances *'emunateka*, "your fidelity." Gunkel writes: "The text is corrupt: it is impossible that *hesed* without the suffix stand parallel to *'emunateka*; one should read *hasdeka*, 'your kindness'." Today only a commentator innocent of Ugaritic poetic usage and a respectable bibliography on the subject would pen a similar annotation.

Himmelfarb tells us that "it's a Jew's business to know Hebrew." Of course a Jew should know Hebrew; more power to him. But we must be clear what is meant by Hebrew, because the definition and description of biblical Hebrew is precisely the *quaestio disputata*. What is described in standard Hebrew grammars or in rabbinic tradition no longer accounts for all the elements in biblical Hebrew. A knowledge of Ugaritic and Phoenician has become indispensable; not for nothing has Ugaritic been taught at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for the past twenty years.

An able Egyptologist, disturbed by the claims made on behalf of Ugaritic and its relevance for the Old Testament, has shaped his doubts in these terms: "I find it difficult to believe that God would have made us wait until the Ras Shamra discoveries to reveal to us the true meaning of so many passages in the Bible." One could perhaps meet his difficulty with the consideration that it is not for us to set *a priori* limits as to the time or the place or the manner that God might choose to disclose to us the meaning of the sacred text. "Speak, LORD, for your servant listens."

Milton Himmelfarb

When I speak peace, they are for war.

—Psalm 120:7

FIRST LET's clear this Jew-v.-Christian thing out of the way. Whether the wars Father Dahood has been fighting in are real or imaginary I don't know, but they aren't mine. He thinks he hears me declare the superiority of Jews

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over Christians in Bible and Hebrew. He is wrong.

Any notion of Jewish superiority in these matters is so foolish that I wouldn't be surprised if that student he mentions, the one in the seminar, were apocryphal. The grammars and lexicons, the very Bible edition I use, are by Christians. The Christian Hebraist Delitzsch thought that rabbinics—not Bible—would probably remain something of a Jewish monopoly, since to master it you have to start young; but the Protestant George Foot Moore did all right though a late starter. A Columbia historian, ordained an Episcopalian priest, has written a dissertation in Hebrew. (I wish I could speak Hebrew as well as an Austrian Catholic scholar I once heard.) The Dane Jespersen was an authority on the English language, the Frenchmen Cazamian and Legouis were authorities on the history of English literature, and since the Renaissance most of the great Greek scholars haven't been Greeks. When I said that it's a Jew's business to know Hebrew, clearly I didn't mean that no one else could know it. That would be too silly.

Father Dahood thinks he detects a holy-war echo in my asking whether there was a link between his Catholic priesthood and his references to the Vulgate. Not at all. That I am a Jew affects how I look at things, above all at things like the Bible. That he is a Catholic priest must affect him. How could it not? His references to the Vulgate were striking, anomalous, only because he had insisted that even the Septuagint didn't know the Ugaritic vocabulary, syntax, and imagery, and therefore couldn't understand Psalms properly. All the more must that hold for less ancient versions; but the Vulgate is hundreds of years later than the Septuagint (which he also appeals to, against his declared principle, when that suits him). I add that three times he refers to Luke and once to St. Ignatius of Antioch. None of which would have been at all noteworthy if not for Dahood's own self-denying ordinance.

And how could a Jew not be struck by this translation of an Ugaritic text (in Dahood's note to Ps. 21:2): "In your life eternal, O father of ours, we rejoice; in your immortality we exult"? "O father of ours" is for Ugaritic *abn* (=Hebrew *'abhinu*). Why so fancy? It's simply "our father." If Dahood was uneasy about translating an invocation to a pagan god by *Pater noster*, "our Father," he needn't have been. "Our Father who art in heaven" is a Jewish formula, *'abhinu shebbashshamayim*.

IT IS TRUE: I am innocent of Ugaritic specifically and Northwest Semitic generally. Reviewing a performance by the Yiddish Art Theater, Brooks Atkinson said he had only enough Yiddish for getting around the Harvard Yard. I have barely more Ugaritic. The Targum was to explain the Hebrew Bible to Aramaic-speaking Jews, but now we use the Hebrew original to understand the Aramaic of the translation. Just so, it's Hebrew that explains Dahood's Ugaritic for me, and not the other way around.

But Dahood's Psalms is being offered to the public, to what used to be known as the common reader. That's me—though, I hope, in the 18th-century sense. I have said that Dahood is good for the specialists, if only by shaking them up. He is less good for the public. The public needs a most probable rendering, in suitable English; and it needs better annotation and comments than Ugaritic alone can furnish. (I'm sorry Father Dahood couldn't resist the temptation to make a debater's point, with that show of indignation over my perverse confusion of Ugaritic with Phoenician. The old chestnut has it that by the rhetorical figure of a part for the whole, "man" embraces "woman." Where appropriate, understand my "Ugaritic" to mean "Ugaritic and/or Phoenician.") I blamed Dahood's editors, or publisher; and he has taken on their defense, or taken personally a criticism meant for them more than him. It's the editors' or publisher's fault that Dahood's Psalms is in the same series with Speiser's Genesis.

As Adam Smith and Bernard Shaw have warned us, a profession can be a conspiracy against the public. What I did was to write a kind of consumers' guide, from a consumer's point of view. Innocence of Ugaritic doesn't necessarily imply innocence of logic. And if Dahood can quote his specialists, I can quote mine. Of the Semitists—Northwest Semitists—and Bible scholars I know, none would translate Psalms as Dahood does. Some have been kind enough to tell me they liked my review; though one has also scolded me for approving Dahood's reading in Ps. 22:26 *me'ittekha*, "from you is/comes," as **me'itikha*, "I will repeat to you a hundred times."

To illustrate the distinction between what may be useful for the specialist and what is desirable for the public, let's take a simple example, essentially favorable to Dahood and having nothing to do with Ugaritic, or prepositions, or new vowels to go with old consonants. The Revised Standard Version for 4:7(6) is: "There are many who say, 'O that we might see some good[*tobh*]! . . .' " Dahood: "Many keep saying, 'Who will show us rain? . . .' " In a note he tells us: "The 'good' par excellence in Palestine is the rain, so that in a number of texts *tob* without further modification concretely signifies 'rain.' " Where do I disagree? If I were he, I would translate *tobh* as "good," and in my note I would say that there is a moist quality to that good. Can we imagine that when the psalmist said *tobh* he meant rain exclusively and no other form of good? His good extended beyond rain, though rain may have been at its center.

In our *Nishmat* prayer, before *Barekhu* on Sabbath and festival mornings, the many millions ("thousand thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads") of boons (or bounties: *pe'amim hattobhot*) for which we regret our inability to give due thanks are certainly, in the first instance, raindrops: so the Mishnah tells us. (The Mishnah also tells us that the blessing for rain is "Blessed art Thou . . . *hattobh wehammetibh*"—"who art good and bountiful", or, "who art good and dost good.") On the one hand, this strengthens the likelihood that Da-

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hood is right in understanding the psalmist's *tobh* as rain; on the other, it suggests that "rain" should not be the actual word used in translation. Even the Rabbis, though in *Nishmat* they had rain mostly in mind, are unlikely to have had it exclusively in mind. The rain belongs in the notes—in the prayer book and especially in Psalms, where the evidence is somewhat less clear. That is, in a Psalms for the public. For specialists, who have *tobh* before them and know what it is, "rain" may be better.

IN THE INTRODUCTION to Psalms I Dahood writes (p. XX, more fully than he quotes himself in the rebuttal): "Not all the proposals submitted here will stand the test of present criticism or future discoveries, but if the present effort succeeds in showing what possibilities are open to the modern student of the Bible, the effort will have proved worth while." Then, he realized he was addressing himself to "the modern student of the Bible" rather than the public, or the common reader. Now, in the rebuttal, he resents my having said —for no matter what reason, and obviously Psalms is harder than Genesis—that his Psalms is less useful to the common reader or the public than Speiser's Genesis.

If Dahood really believed that not everything he has proposed will stand the test of criticism and time, he wouldn't be so unyielding now. In Psalms I he translates 48:15 as "Our eternal and everlasting God—he will guide us eternally." His "eternally" is for *'olamot* (consonantally *'lmwt*), rather than our received text's *'al mut* (consonantally *'l mwt*), literally "on death." Dahood explains himself in this manner: "Just as the first stanza ends with *'ad 'olam* ('forever') (vs. 9), so the poet closes the second stanza and the poem with the synonym *'olamot*. This stylistic observation makes serious inroads into my earlier [1954] proposal, 'He will lead us from death'. . ." (with received *'al* "Ugaritically" meaning "from," not "on").

For our purpose now it isn't important which of these two translations, or whether either of them, is correct. (Biblia Hebraica would assign *'l mwt* at the end of 48 to the immediately following superscription of 49.) What is important is that Dahood could reverse himself. All of us have had second and better thoughts, but not all of us can admit it. In Psalms I Dahood was able to tell us he had changed his mind about something as uncomplicated as *'l mwt*/*'lmwt*. In his letter he can't do it about his much more complicated and contorted **neshe qebher* for *nashequ bhar* in 2:12. Yet on his own showing—and Ugaritically—the contortion was unnecessary from the beginning. He himself quoted Cazelles as translating *bar* by "the Shining One," from Ugaritic *brr*. The difference between Dahood and Cazelles, therefore, is not a difference over accepting or rejecting Ugaritic. The difference is that Cazelles respects the law of parsimony, which is basic to all science and scholarship, while Dahood violates it: Cazelles is as simple as

Ed Sorel

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the phenomena allow him to be, Dahood elaborates and complicates far beyond what they require. In Dahood's introduction (p. XXIII), he says: "In the temple and later in the synagogue, there must have been a strong tradition of prayer and singing which secured the pronunciation of the psalms even when the grammatical parsing of forms was not immediately evident." Dahood's introduction is an argument against his 2:12.

When he comes to dispute with me, he suggests I misrepresented him. Not so. I consciously took John Stuart Mill's advice: when you present someone's reasoning to disagree with it, don't take a debater's advantage; if he hasn't made his argument as strong as it can be, do that for him yourself. With **neshe qebher* Dahood didn't even mention the *w* after *q* (in consonantal *nšqw br*) that needs to be explained away; I did the explaining. Then, to forestall objections, I also explained why the absence of *y* in consonantal *neshe* (i.e., *nš* instead of *nšy*) need cause no difficulty, and I gave his reason why the word needn't be *'anshe*.

DAHOOD CLAIMS THE "sureness" that "the translator's hand acquires" with "practice" and "long and thorough familiarity with Ugaritic poetic usage." Here, chosen from many, are a few examples of that sureness of hand. The emphases are mine.

● Heniadys: in 25:10 Dahood, noting that *berito we'edotaw* is "an example of hendiadys," translates it as—ugh!—"his covenant stipulations"; but in the same verse *hesed we'emet*—which in Speiser's Genesis 24:49 and 47:29 is "true loyalty" and "steadfast loyalty"—as "kindness and truth"; and in 25:6 *rahamekha . . . wahasadekha* as "your compassion and your kindness."

● Alleged homonym: *'am*: 47:2, *kol* ha'ammim *tiqe'u khaph*, "All you *strong ones*, clap your hands"; 47:4, *yadber* 'ammim *tahtenu*, "He made *nations* prostrate beneath us"; 47:10,*nedibhe* 'ammim *ne'esaphu*, 'am *'elohe 'abhraham*, "O nobles of *the peoples* gather round! The God of Abraham is *the strong one. . . .*" (Dahood has missed a chance to bring in the *'am* that means "paternal kinsman.") In a public, liturgical text, meant to be—as the Book of Common Prayer puts it—understanded of the people, he seriously thinks to find recherché puns.

● Another alleged homonym: *'al*: 13:3, *'ad 'anah yarum 'oyebhi* 'alay, "how long must my Foe rejoice *over me*?"; 13:6, *'ashirah* lYHWH *ki gamal* 'alay, "then shall I sing to Yahweh, since *the Most High* is a benefactor." (In Psalms *gamal* [YHWH] *'al* is a fixed expression, as in 116:7, 12, *ki* YHWH *gamal 'alaykhi . . . mah 'ashibh* lYHWH *kol tagmulohi 'alay*.)

● Literal/figurative: 4:3, . . . *'ad meh . . . tebhaqshu* khazabh, "How long will you . . . consult *idols*?"; 5:7, *te'abbed dobhere* khazabh, "destroy those who tell *lies*"; 5:7, *'ish . . .* mirmah *yeta'ebh* YHWH, "the man of . . . *figurines* Yahweh detests"; 24:4, *welo' nishba'* lemirmah, "nor sworn by *a fraud*" (following *'asher lo' nasa'* lashshaw' *naphshi*, "who has not raised his mind [?!] to *an idol*"! Dahood is proud of this, and repeats it in his letter. In 12:3 and 41:7 he gives "falsehood" and "lies" for *shaw'*.) In 5:6b-7 there are only twelve words. Four of them—*'awen, kazabh, damim,* and *mirmah*—are immoralities or crimes, literally; and synonyms for idolatry, figuratively. Yet of these four closely-bunched words, Dahood translates the first two literally and the last two figuratively. With *damim*, above all, Dahood reveals a major weakness: his tendency, despite his lip service to context, to fix on words in isolation. The following is from his note to 5:7: "One should distinguish, it would seem, between *'is damim*, 'a man of blood', and *'is damim* (vocalization doubtful), 'a man of idols.' The root of the latter would be *damah*, 'to be like' . . ., while Latin *similis*, 'similar,' and *simulacrum*, 'image,' illustrate the semantic nexus between the root and the substantive." But here *damim* is in the closest juxtaposition with three other words like it. Each of these has two meanings, the literal and the figurative. If it isn't necessary, or possible, to treat each of

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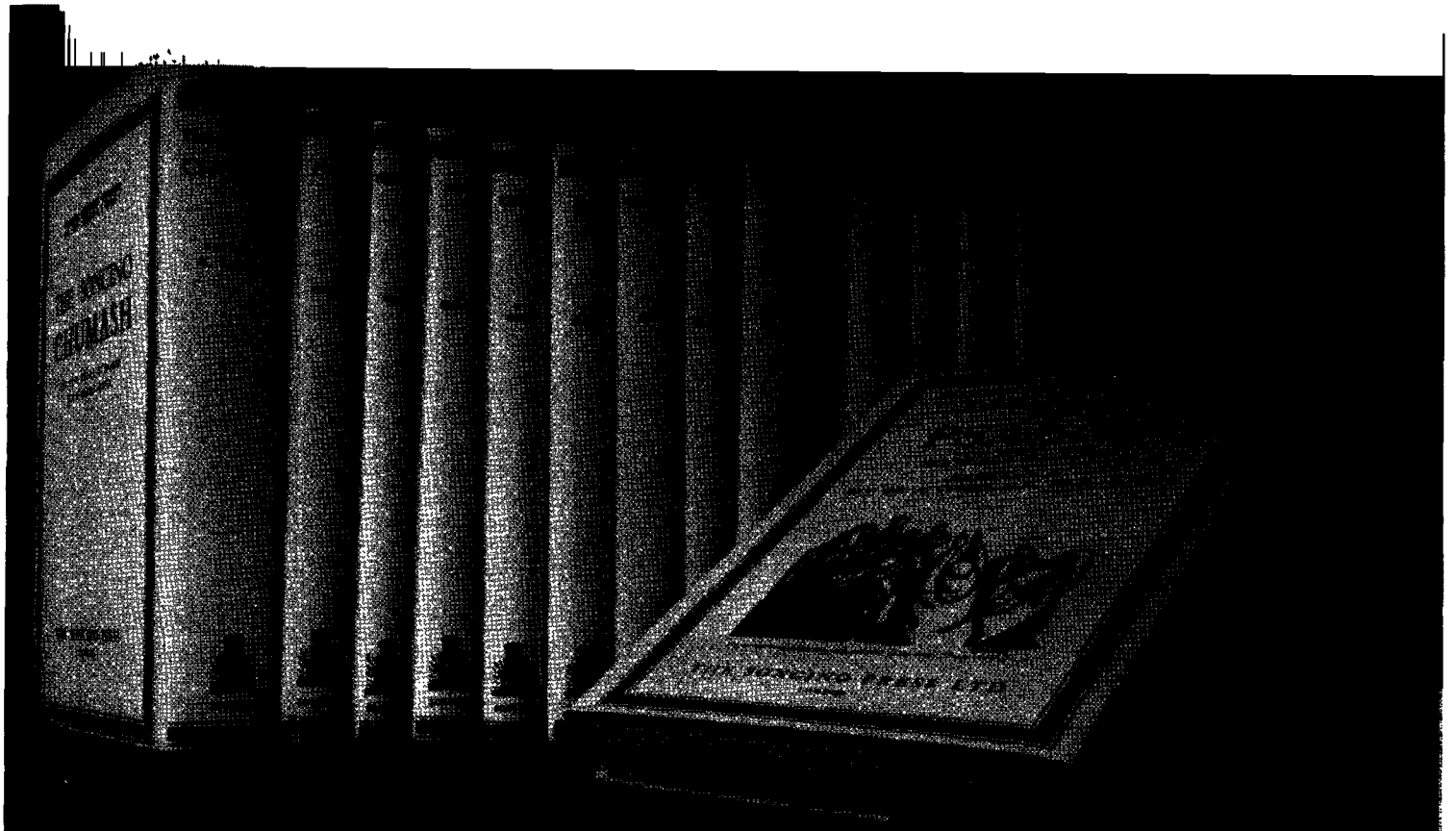

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the others as two distinct words, with two distinct etymons, why the razzle-dazzle of two *damim*'s? Dahood doesn't like to use Ockham's razor.

In my review I didn't give these examples, because I thought they might make sense in what I called a demonstration project for experts. The inconsistencies and arbitrarinesses I took to be deliberate, crediting Dahood with trying to show his colleagues the greatest number of possibilities in the smallest compass.

DAHOOD SAYS: "Before the commentator on Psalms can begin to discuss the *Sitz im Leben* of a Psalm, he must first determine the literal meaning of each verse. . . ." Agreed. But (as in 13:3) *'oyebhi*, "my foe," is for him "my Foe" —"i.e., Death"; or rather Mot, the Canaanite "god of death and sterility." For Dahood *hayyim*, "life," is "life eternal" (as in 16:11), and *haqis* (17:15), "awaken(ing)," is "resurrection." Literal meaning didn't lead Dahood to conclude that such psalms are prayers for eternal life; rather, it was his ideas about psalm types and functions that made him translate those words in that way. I'm not saying he's wrong—or right. I'm saying he can't, or shouldn't, do two contradictory things at the same time: insist he's acting as a linguist with an eye to the literal before all else, and casually make judgments—or prejudgments—that are literary, historical, and theological.

"There is nothing," he says, "a scientific translator can do" but to translate *bene 'elim* (29:1) as "gods." Yet it was the same scientific translator who volunteered the information, in his introduction (p. XXXV), that "Leviathan, Tehom, Mot, Resheph, and other figures of pagan religion were not for the biblical poets religious verities as they were for the Babylonians and Canaanites, but merely mythological references to set off, as the case may be, the omnipotence and majesty of Yahweh." It was he who made a point of telling us, in his note to 29:1, that "in the Old Testament the term [*bene 'elim*] was demythologized and came to refer to the angels or spiritual beings who are members of Yahweh's court and do his bidding." "Demythologized," "angels," and "spiritual beings" are his language, not mine. All I asked was why he didn't match his translation to his note.

LET'S USE Dahood's 20:8 as a case study. He translates: "Some through chariots, and others through horses,/But we through the Name of our God *are strong*." I prefer: "Some *invoke* chariots, and others horses;/but we the name of the LORD our God." The disagreement is about *nazkir*, which for him = "are strong" and for me = "invoke." (His ommission of "the LORD" [YHWH] doesn't affect the issue. He emends rarely, but here he has decided on metrical grounds that it is a later addition.)

Mine is the conventional version. If I saw Dahood's version and mine for the first time, and in English, I might prefer his: being strong / strengthened / supported makes at least as much sense in this verse as invoking/appealing/trusting. If he said he was impressed by the Septuagint's rendering and thought it pointed to a superior Hebrew reading, *nagbir* in place of *nazkir*, I could see the merit in that: the Septuagint has *megalynthesometha*, "we shall be made great." (The editions record that a most important codex, the Sinaiticus, reads *agalliasometha*, "we shall exult/rejoice." That doesn't really suggest still another Hebrew possibility. It's a scribal error. Both Greek texts have *-gal-* and the endings are identical.) A scribe seeing *nagbir*, "we are strong," could have mistaken it for *nazkir*, whether he was copying a Hebrew scroll written in the old, Phoenician or in the new, "Assyrian" script; so our Masoretic Text may have an inferior reading to the one reflected in the Septuagint.

But that isn't what Dahood says. He says that in fact *nazkir* is right, only here it means "we are strong." Without emending, he wants to enjoy the fruits of emendation; and he gets himself into deeper and deeper trouble.

[Note:] . . . *nazkir* . . . a denominative verb from *zakar*, "male," just as Ps xii 5, *nagbir*, "we are powerful," is a denominative verb from *geber*, "man."

That is the assertion. As I have explained, I think it wrong for two reasons: *zakhar* is only "biologically male," not at all synonymous with *gebher*, "powerful, important man"; and Dahood is again ignoring context, concentrating on the word and forgetting the expression. By reference I gave some instances of the expression. (A dozen more could have been given.) Dahood has ignored them, so I shall quote them here: Exodus 23:13: *weshem 'elohim 'aherim lo' tazkiru, lo' yishshama' 'al pikha*, "do not mention the name of other gods; let it not be heard from your mouth"; Joshua 23:7: *ubheshem 'elohehem lo' tazkiru welo' tashbi'u* [or *tishshabhe'u*?], "do not utter the name of their gods and do not swear by them"; Isaiah 48:1: *hannishba'im beshem* YHWH *ubhe'lohe yisra'el yazkiru*, "who swear by the name of YHWH and invoke the God of Israel."

Compare with these the verse we're arguing about, Ps. 20:8: *wa-'anahnu beshem* YHWH *'elohenu nazkir*. Aren't they all of a piece? "We invoke the name of YHWH our God" fits; "we through the name of our God are strong" doesn't fit.

[Note, cont'd:] Ugar. *da-ka-rum*, "man," occurs in the still (December 1964) unpublished quadilingual vocabulary discovered at Ras Shamra in 1958.

The function of this busyness is to conceal emptiness. In what way does Dahood advance his argument here? The Bible itself has *zahkar*, "man, male person," in abundance. What would help Dahood is evidence of Ugaritic *zakar* = "strong man," and of a verb from *zkr* = "to be strong." That, he does not give—because, one assumes, it has not been found.

[Note, cont'd:] The Vulgate and Syriac understood *nazkir* in this manner.

As Pharaoh's cupbearer said, "I must make mention [*mazkir*] today of my offenses." I didn't pay close enough attention to this little sentence in Dahood's note to the psalm.

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FROM THE FIRST I should have been struck by his *not* mentioning the Septuagint. Why Vulgate and Syriac, but not Septuagint? After all, it is the Septuagint which earliest gave "we shall be made great." Perhaps the answer, from Dahood's point of view, is that the scholars think the Greek translators worked from a Hebrew text reading *nagbir*.

Biblia Hebraica refers to the Septuagint and Syriac as rendering "we are strong," but doesn't refer to the Vulgate. Could it be that Dahood had come across something which had escaped the notice of former generations of scholars, though they thought highly of the versions and he doesn't? This time I checked the Vulgate.

The Vulgate reads *invocabimus,* "we shall invoke."

To repeat: Dahood rejects "invoke"; he appeals to the evidence of the Vulgate; the Vulgate has "invoke." I'm baffled.

(There *is* a Latin version with *fortes sumus,* "we are strong"—the one produced in the 1940's by the Pontifical Biblical Institute. The Institute's translators preferred the Septuagint's reading.)

I haven't checked the Syriac version, because I can't read Syriac scripts. I take Biblia Hebraica's word for it that the Syriac is indeed "we are strong." That proves exactly nothing: the Syriac translators may have worked from the Greek rather than the Hebrew.

What makes the whole thing almost comical is that Dahood has no right to appeal to versions in the first place. In his introduction (p. XXIV) he tells us: "A significant corollary of Ugaritic studies will be the devaluation of the ancient versions. My constant experience in studying Psalms (as well as Job and Proverbs) has been that Ugaritic embarrassingly exposes—at least in the poetic books—the shortcomings of the versions and seriously undermines their authority as witnesses to the original text." In his letter he argues that even the Qumran monks no longer understood usages explicable by Ugaritic. Yet those monks were Northwest-Semitically bilingual—in Hebrew and Aramaic. If they

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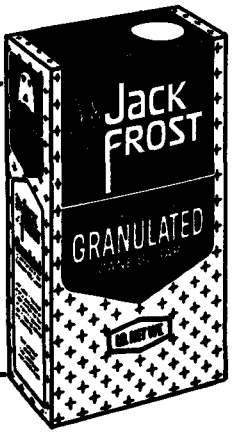

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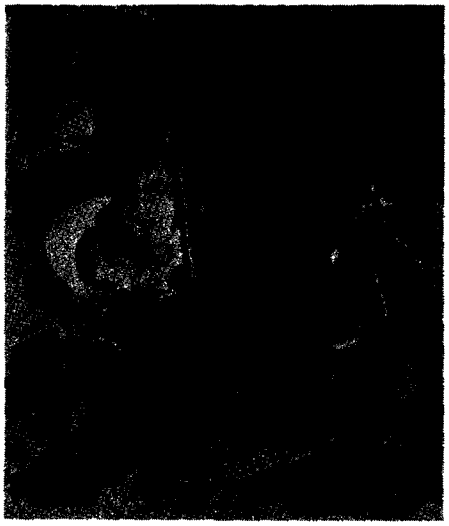
didn't understand, no one else could have understood. Dahood citing versions is like that lawyer arguing for the defense: We never borrowed it; anyway, we returned it; besides, it was broken to begin with.

> [Note, concluded:] Cf. Exod xxxiv 19 and Nah ii 6, *yizkeru* (M[asoretic]T[ext] *yizkor*) *'addirayw yikkaselu bahalikotam,* "His captains are strong, they hurtle in their march" (courtesy W. Beuken).

To this must be joined what Dahood says in his letter:

> . . . [Himmelfarb] fails to mention Nahum 2:5-6 (cited in Psalms I, p. 129), "The chariots rage in the streets, they rush to and fro through the squares. They gleam like torches, they dart like lightning. The officers *yzkr,* they hurtle in their march, they hasten to the wall, the mantelet is set up." In this context of careening chariots and charging soldiers, *yzkr* makes no sense as "remember," but "are strong" fits. Hence vocalize *yazkiru* [against his earlier *yizkeru*—MH].



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IN THIS MORASS, where to start?

Observe that between publishing his book and writing his letter Dahood has silently, and wisely, dropped Exodus 34:19 as evidence for *hizkir*="to be strong." So we move on to Nahum 2:6. First of all, Dahood's trying to clarify Psalms by Nahum is an exercise in *obscurum per obscurius,* the illumination of darkness by greater darkness. Nahum is not lacking in textual difficulties. The entire book consists of only forty-seven verses; the Revised Standard Version feels free to depart from the vowels of the Masoretic Hebrew text without comment; yet even so, fourteen times RSV notes that it finds the Hebrew consonants enigmatic or unacceptable, and therefore either translates conjecturally or adopts the Septuagint's reading.

This having been said, Nahum 2:5-6 still doesn't help Dahood's case. As he reminds us, we are dealing with a "context of careening chariots and charging soldiers": Nineveh, besieged, is falling. Every verb but one in Dahood's own translation conveys feverish, agitated motion. That verb, the only one whose meaning is disputed, he then tells us is stative. In the midst of all that raging, rushing, gleaming, darting, hurtling, hastening, and rigging, *yzkr* is supposed to mean "are strong." At least RSV's "the officers are summoned" suggests action.

I like Biblia Hebraica's suggestion: emend *yzkr* to *ykrkr(w),* i.e., *yekharkeru*—which yields "his nobles/officers prance/whirl." Or emend *yzkr 'dyryw* to *ydhr(w) 'byryw,* i.e., *yidharu 'abbiraw,* "his war horses gallop." Cf. Nahum 3:2, only a few verses later: *sus doher,* "galloping horse."

NOW THE GREATEST bafflement of all—Dahood's letter, continued, about *nazkir*:

> The new edition of the *Hebräisches Lexikon* deems *hizkir,* "to be strong," worthy of entry (p. LII) . . . .

Dahood rightly praises the Baumgartner lexicon; its reputation is high. He tells us the latest edition pays much attention to Ugaritic. How could it not? Suppose the archeologists uncovered a body of previously unknown writing in Oscan or Umbrian. Would the lexicographers of Latin fail to make use of it? No one denies that Ugaritic is pertinent to an understanding of biblical Hebrew. What I deny is that Dahood makes a well-founded appeal to Ugaritic in this case.

Turn to p. LII of the 1967 edition of Baumgartner, in the introductory section. You are referred to *zkr* I (of which the basic meaning is "remember"). There you read that *nazkir* in Ps. 20:8 should be emended to *nagbir*! The addition on p. LII—translated from German to English, and from symbols to words—is as follows: "In our emendation of Ps. 20:8 we differ from Dahood (*Biblica,* Vol. 45, p. 466), who, interpreting *nazkir* as deriving from *zkr* II, translates 'to be strong.'" (*Zkr* II, "male," appears in Baumgartner only as adjective and noun, without any verb form.)

So Dahood's reference to Baumgartner is in fact a reference to Baumgartner's negative reference to Dahood. "Worthy of entry?" That depends on what you mean by entry.

Dahood's sentence continues:

> . . . [Baumgartner] explains *hit'osasu,* "show yourselves men," in Isaiah 46:8 as a denominative verb (p. 97b) from *'iš,* "man, male."

Consider the forensic beauty of that "(p. 97b)." It's usual to refer by page number to the introductory matter of a dictionary, not to the dictionary proper. The page and column here are to impress us, extrinsically, with the meticulous exactness of it all—so that we will lose sight of its intrinsic nullity: the hand is quicker than the eye. But farce keeps breaking in. The showy exactness is inexact. The entry is on p. 96b, not 97b.

As to the substance. Baumgartner explicitly acknowledges that *hit'oshashu* as "denominative from *'ish*" is Gesenius'; and Gesenius—a Christian, and the greatest Hebraist of modern times—died in 1842, nearly a century before the discovery of Ugaritic.

Dahood's sentence concludes:

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. . . *'iš*, "man, male," . . . like *zakar* emphasizes the anatomical aspect rather than qualities of courage or strength.

Pure ipsedixitism. Dahood says this, not Baumgartner. For his part, Gesenius considers that the root of *'ish* is *'yš*, "to be strong"—as in the theophorous name Jeho*ash*/Jo*ash*, which he interprets as "YHWH *is strong*."

Now it is certain that *'ish* also means "biologically male." For instance, in Genesis 7:2 Noah is commanded: "Of every clean animal you shall take seven pairs, the male and his mate, and of every animal which is not clean, two, the male and his mate"—"the male and his mate" twice rendering *'ish we'ishto*. But Dahood himself doesn't really believe that the primary meaning of *'ish* is biological. Rightly he translates *bene 'ish* (Ps. 4:3) as "men of rank" and *gam bene 'adam gam bene 'ish* (49:3) as "of lowly birth or high degree." As Dahood doesn't need to be told, *'ish* (or its plural, *'anashim*) is the word for the angelic or divine personages in the epiphanies to Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, and Manoah and his wife, to whom Samson will be born. (When the young Joseph, sent on an errand to his brothers by Jacob, asks an *'ish* for directions—the word occurs three times in Genesis 37:15, 17—the Rabbis assume an angel is meant, or alternatively, the three angels who appeared to Abraham. Some Rabbis know exactly who that angel is: Gabriel—"as it is said [Daniel 9:21], *weha'ish gabhri'el*," where "man"="angel." Note that *gbr* is a constituent of "Gabriel.")

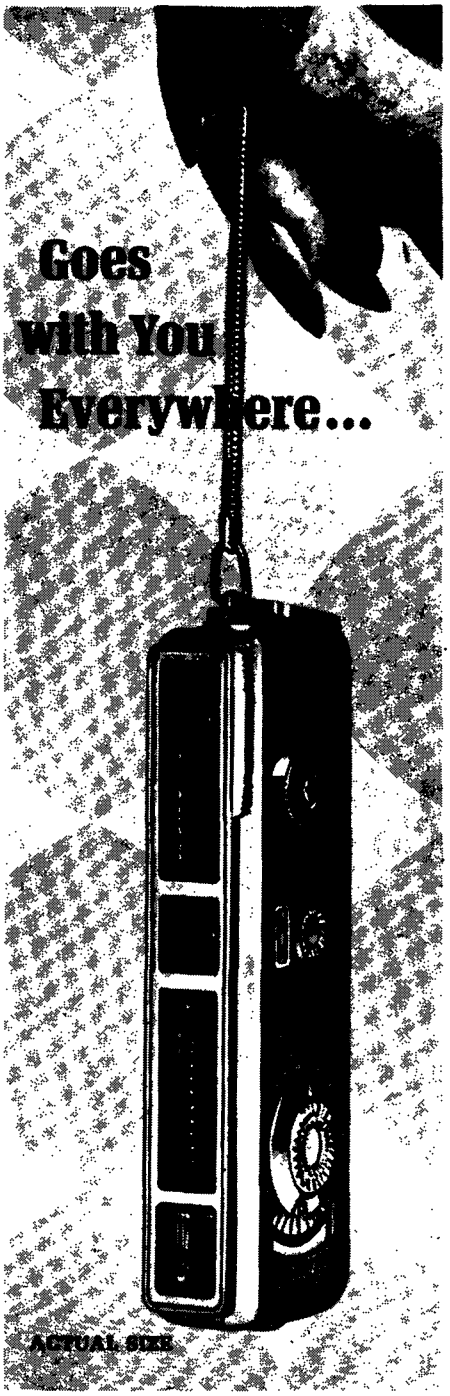
We are back where we started. Dahood has not shown that *zakhar*, "male," also means "strong, dominant." He has not shown that *hizkir* means "to be *zakhar*." And he has not shown us an Ugaritic or a plausible Hebrew parallel to what he thinks he has discovered in Ps. 20:8.

FATHER DAHOOD regards me as some kind of fundamentalist—probably about belief, certainly about learning. Let's take belief first. I'm not altogether sure how it is with the fundamentalists of other traditions, but Jewish fundamentalists don't propose emendations of the Bible text. Dahood has no need to reassure me that it shouldn't be "difficult to believe that God . . . made us wait until the Ras Shamra discoveries to reveal to us the true meaning of so many passages in the Bible." That isn't one of my more serious difficulties about belief. If he had attended to what I wrote, he wouldn't have felt it necessary to give me the reassurance. "With the help of the late E. A. Speiser's translation and notes, in the Anchor Bible," I wrote, "we could understand Genesis better than the men of an earlier day. Above all, Speiser was a linguist."

As to learning, Dahood apparently thinks me not only fundamentalist, but also—or perhaps it's the same thing—hot for certainties, intolerant of ambiguities. Gently he takes me by the hand; compassionately he agrees that of course it's unsettling to be suddenly confronted with all those prepositions (and tenses, and so on) that have been violently sundered from their ancient moorings, or meanings; but it will hurt only a little while, he says; my distress will soon pass; and I will realize how much better off I am, and everyone is, now that liberty has been proclaimed throughout the land to all its inhabitants.

I thank Father Dahood for the kind thought, which is not less kind for being misdirected. What I wrote was this: "Not that such things may not exist, but that he [sc., Dahood] makes entirely too free with them." It's up to him to show not that they exist, but that he isn't making too free with them. Bothering to convince me of their existence is forcing an open door. In Psalms I Dahood cites an article in the 1959 *Journal of Biblical Literature* on interchangeable *b-* and *min*. I read it, at the time, because I know the author, Nahum Sarna; and I learned from it.

Does anyone have to be told that prepositions can be tricky, especially when you're translating? *Paris est en France* is "Paris is in France," but *le Louvre est à Paris* is not "the Louvre is at/to Paris." Latin *in* with ablative can be "in, on," etc.; with accusative, "into,



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towards, against, for," etc. There is no one right way to translate Greek *meta,* or *para.*

I have quoted Exodus 23:13, which includes *'al pikha*: RSV, "out of your mouth"; Jewish Publication Society, 1962, "on your lips." With RSV, I prefer to "change" the preposition and keep the noun unchanged. Do I think RSV gives the right translation and JPS a wrong one? Of course not; English idiom doesn't allow "on your mouth." We are not to infer that English-speaking people think words come from the mouth but remain on the lips.

Dahood cites *bashshamayim* (Ps. 18:14) and *min shamayim* (II Samuel 22:14). Must they signify the same thing? Is it absurd to imagine that the editor of the Psalms text thought of the thundering as being in the sky while the editor of Samuel thought of it as from the sky? I can think in both ways about thunder. Why couldn't they?

I particularly admire that neat touch of Dahood's: "the later recension of this verse [Ps. 18:14] in II Samuel 22:14. . . ." Again, ipsedixitism. Dahood doesn't mean that the psalm that appears in II Samuel is a later recension of the psalm that appears in Psalms. He says nothing about that in his Psalms I; and one doesn't choose late texts over early ones, yet he uses II Sam. 22 for emending Ps. 18. (In Ps. 18:5 for *hebhle mawet,* "the cords/pangs of death," he reads II Sam. 22:5, *mishbere mawet,* "the breakers of Death.") Quite simply, Dahood is embarrassed by the *min* of II Sam. 22:14, so by fiat he makes it a later recension than the *ba-* of Ps. 18:14.

A final illustration of how Father Dahood overdoes things: Ps. 2:4: *yoshebh* bashshamayim *yishaq, 'adonay yil'ag lamo.* RSV: "He who sits *in the heavens* laughs; the LORD has them in derision." Jerusalem Bible (Catholic): "The One whose throne is *in heaven* sits laughing, Yahweh [*'adonay* emended to YWHW] derides them." But Dahood: "The Enthroned laughs *down from heaven,* the Lord makes sport of them."

By attaching *bashshamayim* to "laughs," Dahood arbitrarily leaves *yoshebh,* "he who sits/is enthroned," without a modifier. That God is *yoshebh bashshamayim,* "enthroned in heaven," is paralleled by the frequent *yoshebh (hak) kerubhim,* "enthroned on (the) cherubim"; by Ps. 123:1, *hayyoshebhi bashshamayim,* "Thou who art enthroned in heaven"; and by Ps. 113:5, *'elohenu hammagbihi lashabhet* "our God, enthroned on high."

To repeat: not that *b-* can't mean "from," but that for Dahood plenty isn't enough.

I end this by calling Dahood to witness against Dahood:

(a) [Note to 9:3:] . . . *min in* UT. [sc., C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*], 1015:10-11, *w um tšmh mab,* "And may my mother draw her happiness from my father."

(The *m-* in *mab* is *min.* We haven't the right diacritical mark for that Ugaritic *h.*)

(b) [Note to 10: 1:] In Ugaritic poetry, in fact, there is no preposition *min,* "from" . . . .

Six pages separate Dahood's statements of the existence and nonexistence of Ugaritic *min.*

All that freewheeling may not prevent Dahood from being helpful to scholars, but we common readers need someone a little less dashing.

THERE REMAINS only to make a final observation, on the letters in response to my article published in the May issue.

I don't think it's reasonable to expect every Jew to be a Bible expert, or that even a (desirable) knowledge of Hebrew will make people Bible experts. Once I met a Viennese girl, two years after her graduation from a *Gymnasium,* who read Thomas Mann in English because in German he was too hard. English doesn't necessarily open the *Faerie Queene* to us.

In a "Utopian" sort of way, I said it would be nice if we knew enough Hebrew "to be able to weigh one translation of Psalms against another." I grant that that may be simple-minded.

"The LORD protects the simple. . ." (Ps. 116:6).

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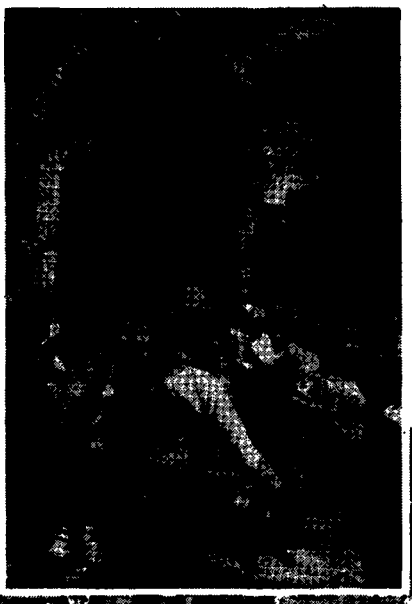

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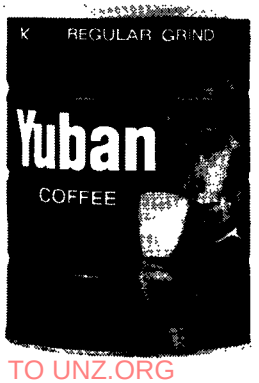

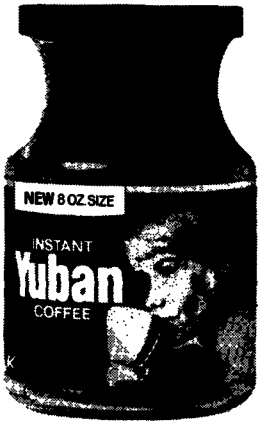

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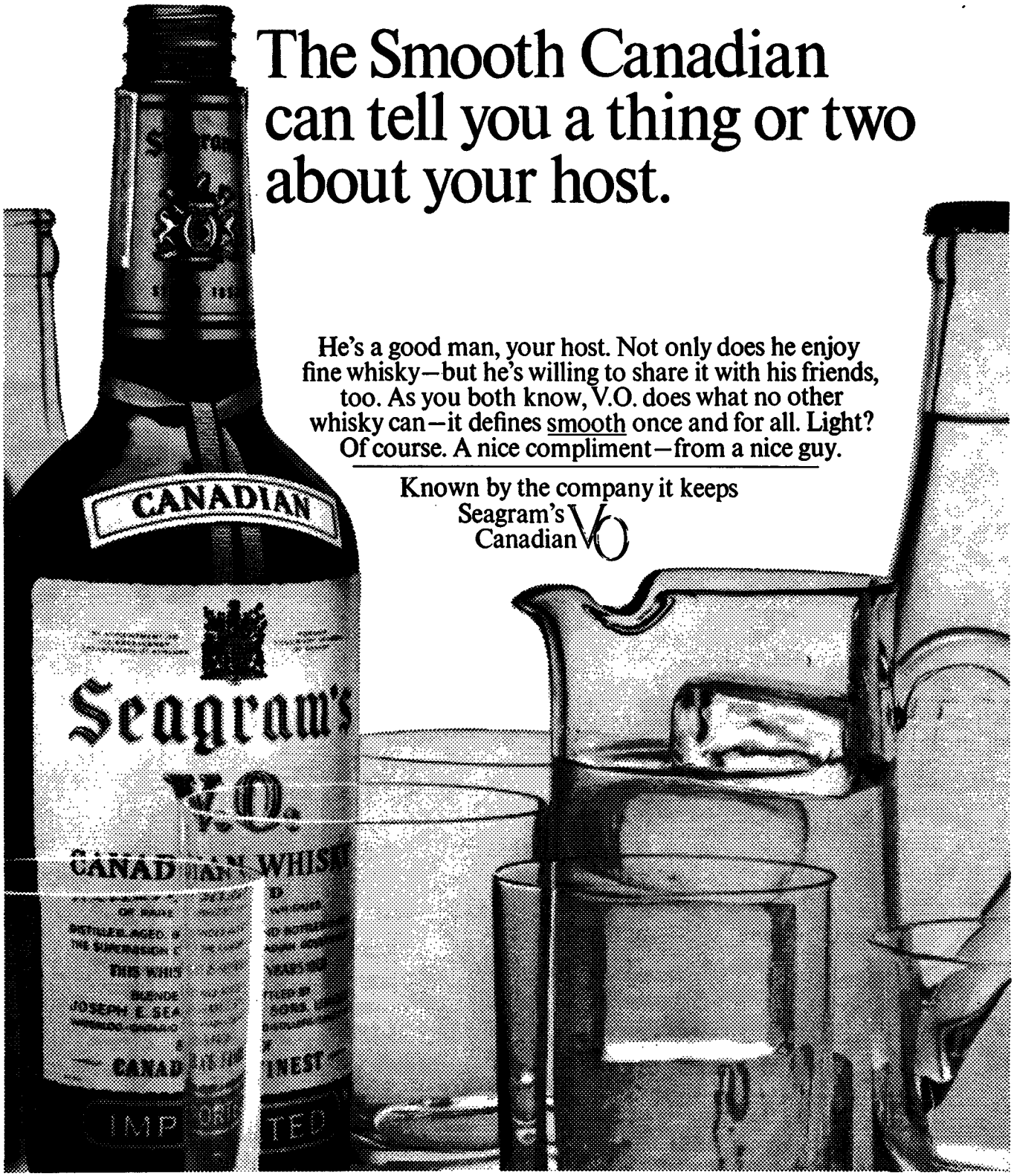

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What Happened in France

George Lichtheim

LONDON, AUGUST.—Contemplating the French volcano from the wrong side of the Channel this summer has been an unnerving experience. At times one had the sensation of being involved in one of those *avant-garde* productions in which the actors come down from the stage to harangue the audience. Most of the time, though, it was more a matter of trying to inhabit two different worlds at the same time. *There* was France on the brink of revolution (or so it seemed) and *here* was Britain stolidly consuming its usual diet of parliamentary cold porridge. At the height of the crisis it looked for a day or two as though the British universities might break through this invisible barrier by producing a minor explosion of their own. But in the end they simmered down, and the country went back to its habitual somnolence, barely disturbed by mutterings about Scottish separatism and the customary warnings about another financial storm in the autumn. Whitehall may be thinking about membership in a future European confederation; the average Briton still fancies himself a cut above those Continentals, who cannot even govern themselves properly and are always having upsets of one kind or another.

Fortunately there are the media. On the present occasion the august British Broadcasting Corporation was induced to conduct an experiment calculated to arouse the public from its accustomed repose. Greatly daring, the Corporation invited student rebels from a dozen European countries (plus a solitary delegate from Morningside Heights) to inform the television viewers about the new movement. And so, on a hot day in June, tragedy and farce were briefly permitted to mingle. While in Paris the students hurled fire-bombs at the police, to avenge the (probably accidental) death of a seventeen-year old drowned in the Seine while fleeing from the gendarmes, the BBC laid on an hour's entertainment for the great British public. Chaired by a respectable middle-aged moderator (in his spare time the author of weighty textbooks on the British party system), the student leaders patiently tried to explain what it was all about. One hour was too short, and the chairman took up too much time acquainting listeners with his own views. However, one or two points became a little clearer. It was evident, for example, that not all the invited guest speakers were entirely at home with the theoretical case put on their behalf by Dr. Ekkehart Krippendorf of West Germany, a teacher miraculously transformed into a student for the occasion. It was likewise fairly obvious that the handsome mustachioed Tariq Ali, a descendant of one of Pakistan's great families, could not count on unanimous support from those present when he said, "Most of us are libertarian Marxists." *He* may be one. His French friends—Geismar of the teachers' union, and Cohn-Bendit of the self-styled "March 22nd movement"—sounded more like old-style Jacobins: *pas de liberté pour les ennemies de la liberté.*

The others were a mixed lot. The Spaniard, for obvious reasons, could not give his name, but made it clear that he and his friends wanted plain ordinary freedom and no fancy talk about "transcending bourgeois democracy" (non-existent in Spain). The Italian delegate spoke soberly and temperately, as befitted the representative of a country where democracy is still a fragile plant, though increasingly accepted even by Communists. The Czech, a studious-looking youth, seemed bookish and was clearly made uncomfortable by some of the talk about violence. And the group's pinup girl, Dragana Stavijel of Belgrade, caused mute consternation all round by (1) praising Tito and (2) listing Mao Tse-tung along with Yugoslavia's hated ex-police boss, Alexander Rankovic, among the "negative social influences" she wanted to see removed. The Maoist sympathizers present were struck dumb, but gave voice the following day when they denounced her, publicly and privately, as a Titoist plant. They might, one felt, have known what to expect from those East European revisionists who actually believe in liberty—for everyone, not just for themselves. After all, West Germany's Dutschke had an embarrassing experience in Prague last spring, when the Czech students urged him to drop his anarchist prattle about doing away with legal guarantees of "formal liberty." Constitutional guarantees of freedom (he was told) was just what they wanted, not having had any during twenty years of Stalinist rule and Orwellian doublethink. Ah well. . . .

But we have not reached quite the end of this little episode, so revelatory of the sustained polarity summed up in the words "France" and "Brit-

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ain." For here was Daniel Cohn-Bendit—Danny the Red to the popular press—the terror (one was assured) of the French bourgeoisie and the scourge of France's bovine Communist party. And what did *he* have to say? Nothing one had not heard a thousand times from other libertarians. But the whole and unadorned truth about this young desperado was vouchsafed to readers of the *Times* at breakfast the following morning (June 14), for there they could read the parliamentary report on the Home Secretary's exchange with angry Tory backbenchers who demanded to know why this dangerous firebrand had been allowed into the country. Because, said Mr. James Callaghan (sounding like a benevolent uncle assuring a lot of nervous maiden aunts that they were not going to be raped) Cohn-Bendit wanted to visit his relatives. Moreover, he also wanted to see Buckingham Palace and "I could think of nothing better than that for his education. . . . I thought it would be useful for him to do some of the things he wanted to do. I have even offered to teach him the words of the *Internationale* which he doesn't seem too sure of" (Laughter). There'll always be an England.

THERE WILL likewise always be a certain amount of sly satisfaction on this side of the water whenever France appears to be in the kind of trouble that is not too deep and dangerous. This became very evident during the month of May, when the French economy seemed to have been laid low by the general strike. *Schadenfreude* assumed even broader proportions in June, when the franc wobbled on the exchanges and Paris had to draw on the credit facilities of the International Monetary Fund. After all those tedious lectures about sterling. . . . Then there were the usual mixed feelings about de Gaulle. He had it coming to him (said the newspaper and and TV sages), for being such an old autocrat, and more especially for being so unhelpful about Britain's membership application to join the Common Market. On the other hand, if he went back to Colombey in a huff, and the Communists took over. . . . On balance, the *Times* and the *Economist* decided to treat him as the lesser evil, and the other organs of opinion followed suit. There is, after all, no guarantee that a French government of even the moderate Left would be more forthcoming than the present one about Britain's remaining NATO obligations. Having missed the European bus in the 1950's, the British have learned to be patient. There will be time to revive this particular issue when the General is gone.

Anything else before we cross the Channel? Well, there has been a temporary slump in British crypto-Gaullism of the "all we need is a strong man to get us out of our economic mess" variety. But this will creep back like a fog, if only because the economic outlook remains bleak for as long as anyone can see ahead. Then there is the recent growth of racialism fed by the (now ebbing but still substantial) tide of colored immigrants from the West Indies and other surviving bits and pieces of what used to be known as the British Empire. The Conservative party can hardly afford to ignore this muddy pool of popular resentment, strongest of course among the lower strata of the working class. One-third of this class regularly votes Tory anyhow (in England, as distinct from Scotland and Wales, the proportion is nearer one-half). Between now and the next general election, racialism promises to become an even bigger issue than economic stagnation. Contrary to an impression seemingly prevalent abroad, dislike of colored immigration is fairly evenly spread across the British political spectrum and by no means confined to the Right. It is, however, likely to benefit the Tories rather than their opponents who have to live down a liberal phraseology familiar to the intellectuals but unattractive to the working class.

Closer to the political and cultural center, the Liberal Establishment goes on talking (mostly to itself) about the need to make the country more efficient and competitive economically. This is probably the most unpopular line of all, and by itself would be quite enough to explain the virtual collapse of the Liberal party as a political force, even if liberalism as a philosophy had not already disintegrated for other reasons. There is some hope among liberal-minded academics that radical students may be won over by talk of "participation" and reform of the educational system. That system could stand a hefty kick in the backside, but even the more progressive teachers are dubious about slogans that amount to letting the students decide what is to be taught. Middle-aged liberals or Fabians are old enough to remember what happened to Germany's universities when they were taken over by the Hitler Youth. Not that one would wish to compare the present generation of student anarchists with Hitler's storm troopers, but there happens to be a principle at stake. Even the New Left (which includes a number of teachers) is unlikely to fall for the gospel of Student Power. Where it currently scores is in reminding everyone that the French have lately been arguing about political *principles*. This interesting phenomenon has been noted with approval even by some of the more academic Tories who would dearly like to see a genuine debate over fundamentals take the place of Harold Wilson's cherished "pragmatism."

And so on to France and our real topic. But not without casting a last long lingering look behind at all those elderly teenagers who during the merry month of May did their damnedest to climb

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on board the revolutionary bandwagon. Alas, their juniors rudely told them to get off at the nearest stop. Next to a purple-faced Tory muttering darkly about subversive foreigners, the world holds no sadder sight than an aging radical who thinks he has spotted a victorious revolution abroad over which he can enthuse in perfect safety. The British Left this year has had to digest some disconcerting experiences. First there was that changeover in Prague—clearly something to be applauded, but also a bit confusing: what with the workers at first seemingly backing Novotny and his Stalinist clan, while the revisionists (mislabeled "liberals" for want of a better term) in the party leadership had to rely on the intelligentsia and the students. Then the Soviet reaction: the usual mixture of brutality and helpless imbecility. And lastly the uprising in Paris—itself set off by the now familiar combination of governmental obtuseness and student anarchism—disclosed the regime and the principal trade unions in the role of twin pillars of "order," whereupon for a month Gaullists and Communists conducted what was evidently a sham battle for control of parliament; the while Pompidou, Mitterand, and Mendès-France—allegedly mortal foes—all talked virtually the same reformist language, to the visible distress of their (conservative or radical) clienteles. It was enough to make an old *New Statesman* reader wonder what the world was coming to.

Nor was the Left alone in its bewilderment. What de Gaulle has recently had to say about workers' "participation" and the evils of capitalism sounded strange to British Conservatives unused to such language. The *Times* kept its editorial balance, but eyebrows were raised in the City, while Fleet Street gave vent to its inbred francophobia by playing up every minor act of violence and gleefully predicting that the outcome of the elections would be determined by "fear," "bribery," or even "police pressure." One might have thought they were talking about Rumania, or perhaps Nigeria. For all one knows, these writers thought so too. Oddly enough, the French do not care for this kind of stuff, France not being the Congo but an ancient European country and in most respects as civilized as its neighbors, if not more so. But then the British have never had much use for benighted Continentals, and it takes only very little to bring out their ingrained sense of superiority. On which note we may leave them and board a cross-Channel steamer, after having first made sure about our re-entry: for these days a British passport no longer carries an automatic guarantee of admittance into the country, unless one happens to have been born there. Another of those little things that, taken together, add up to a shift from universalism to a kind of stodgy insularity.

II

What then do the French themselves think of their latest upheaval? Those among them, that is, who have the inclination and the means to make themselves heard. For of course there are also the millions who rarely speak up in public: the men and women who, unless they go on strike or cast their vote in the ballot box, are simply taken for granted. To whom, if one is so minded, one may add the dead in the countless cemeteries—all those mute inglorious ancestors who once walked the earth, and who by their actions or inactions helped to make the world what it is.

I seem to have started off on a conservative, not to say Burkean note. But it was Marx who wrote: "The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living." Marx—so frequently invoked these days, so seldom read: least of all by the new breed of radicals who take his name in vain, secure in the knowledge that their elders will not contradict them. For who in these stirring times is going to look up what a bearded Victorian scholar had to say about the movements of his age? We, the contemporaries of the great McLuhan, consumers of endless TV lectures on the relentless march of progress and the ever-growing size of the gross national product, cannot be bothered with Victoriana. And yet one wonders at times whether ignorance and arrogance are wholly admirable; whether there may not be some advantage in having actually read Marx and Lenin, in addition to Fanon and Guevara; whether the new radicals can really afford to go on with the fashionable cult of illiteracy. As for their elders . . . Roger Priouret, writing last June in Servan-Schreiber's *L'Express,* remarked upon Sartre's conversation with Cohn-Bendit at the peak of the students' revolt (as reproduced in the left-wing *Nouvel Observateur*); took note of the young man's cheerful declamations about the "uncontrollable spontaneity" of the movement he and a few others had helped to start; and wondered aloud why Sartre did not remind him that all this stuff about action for the sake of action was just a rehash of Georges Sorel, and that Sorel had been Mussolini's teacher. If it is simply a matter of an "active minority" stirring things up to get the masses moving in some direction totally unforeseen and unforeseeable, then paratroopers may get into the act as well as students; and indeed have done so in the past . . . .

Not that Sartre is blameworthy for having egged the militants on while they were in occupation of the Sorbonne. As a philosopher he may even be said to have a prescriptive right to the role of elderly Socratic sage, caught up in a tempest to which his own writings had made no small

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contribution. And anyway he wanted nothing for himself. Others were less disinterested, though not for that reason much more effective. M. Servan-Schreiber for example . . . . That special supplement of *L'Express* which he somehow managed to get out last May, when all periodicals (including his own) were strikebound, is likely to become a collector's item; if only for the sake of its full-page signed editorial boldly headlined *La Renaissance de la France*. The country, it seems, had been awakened by the great insurrection from years of torpid decline, and Servan-Schreiber—like his friend Mitterand, who at the same moment made his singularly ill-timed bid for power—stood ready to give a lead. The special number hit the streets during the brief interval between de Gaulle's first and second broadcasts, when for a few days it looked as though the Old Man might go back to Colombey, and there was no mistaking the tone of its editorial proclamation: power lay there to be grasped, and MM. Mitterand and Servan-Schreiber (but not the Communists, who were biding their time) thought the moment had come. Historians of the French Revolution (the great one) have commonly depicted the Girondists as the unluckiest lot of aristocratic pseudo-radicals who ever tried to seize the leadership of a great popular movement. Their successors will be able to devote a footnote to the sad experience of MM. Servan-Schreiber and Mitterand in 1968.

But there was Mendès-France—"the only opponent de Gaulle takes seriously." Yes indeed, but where exactly did he stand? Well, *pro forma* he was parliamentary leader of the *Parti Socialiste Unifié*: originally a breakaway from the official Socialist party of Guy Mollet, by last May a hold-all of warring factions ranging from Keynesian liberals and radical technocrats to old-style syndicalists and newfangled Castroites, with Mendès-France himself uneasily poised at the center of this whirlpool—at sixty-one an elder stateman, yet the only ex-Premier of the Fourth Republic with a hold upon the imagination of the young, and the only prominent political leader who publicly cast his lot with the radical students and workers who gathered at the Charléty stadium outside Paris on May 27th, with the red flags of revolution and the black banners of revolt flying over their heads. Charléty was repeatedly thrown in his face by the Gaullist opponent who unseated him (with the connivance of the local Communists) in the election campaign in June, and on each occasion he gave the same reply: it had been his *duty* as a democrat to "seek a dialogue" with the young at a moment when authority seemed to have collapsed in the face of popular revolt. Had he thereby encouraged a revolutionary movement? Well, "revolution" was respectable in France. After all, de Gaulle in his televised interview on June 7th had claimed with some pride to have initiated a few revolutions himself . . . .

BUT IN TRUTH the rage of the Gaullists was directed not against Mendès-France, a man the General respects, but against François Mitterand, the titular leader of the non-Communist Federation of the Left to which the P.S.U. was only very loosely affiliated. Had the democratic Left triumphed in the elections, instead of suffering the debacle it did, de Gaulle might conceivably have turned to Mendès-France. To Mitterand never! For Mitterand on May 29th, two days after Charléty and while de Gaulle had briefly left the Elysée to consult his army commanders, had boldly proclaimed that the seat of authority lay vacant, and that he, Mitterand, was willing to step in. It was a naked bid for power—not the sort of thing de Gaulle is likely to forgive. To make things worse, it was both premature and unconstitutional. For if de Gaulle *had* gone back to Colombey, the Constitution provided for an orderly succession, with the President of the Senate—Gaston Monnerville, an old-fashioned democrat and incidentally a "colored" Senator from Martinique—filling the role of acting President of the Republic during the interim period. By making his ill-timed announcement in the confused period between de Gaulle's first and second broadcast, Mitterand irretrievably spoiled his image with millions of voters who had previously taken his democratic rhetoric seriously. It did him no good that on the same occasion he named Mendès-France as the man best suited to be Prime Minister in an interim government of the Left. Who was he to make such pronouncements—a pretender with a motley following that barely filled one-quarter of the Assembly elected in March 1967 (and a good deal less now)? Mendès-France himself stayed silent that day. So did the Communists, who had their own reasons for disliking him: he had never been their choice, and his *Parti Socialiste Unifié* was now busy trying to outflank them on the Left, while its leader still had allies in the political Center and even further to the Right. . . .

Do constitutional niceties matter during a spontaneous popular uprising? Not if one happens to be a Leninist, or the sort of anarcho-syndicalist who cares not a fig for bourgeois democracy in general and elections in particular (*élections-trahison* became the rallying-cry of the extreme Left in June). But Mitterand had come to the top as leader of a parliamentary opposition which constantly appealed to democratic tradition against Gaullist authoritarianism. He could not well afford to profess indifference for the constitutional process; the less so since for ten years he had questioned the legitimacy of the Gaullist regime, on the grounds that it had come to power by exploiting the May 1958 army revolt in Al-

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geria. In point of fact de Gaulle on that occasion had quite properly waited for the aged René Coty, then President of the Republic, to entrust him with the Premiership, and had thereupon obtained a vote of confidence in the National Assembly, with a majority of the Socialists supporting his newly appointed government (which included Guy Mollet). If anything he had then shown himself a stickler for legality and due process to the point of pedantry, even though some of his lieutenants did fan the flames in Algiers. Now, ten years later, he was once more in the role that suited him best: defender of the Republic and bulwark of "order" against the demons of "anarchy." The Left might argue that he was simply playing a part. If so, he showed himself more adept than their own leaders, now cast in the unattractive garb of rebels against the Constitution, and unsuccessful rebels at that. The Communists displayed better tactical sense when they came forward as upholders of "order." Not that it did them much good in the June election, but at least they avoided the pitfall of sounding like revolutionaries when in fact they were trying to avoid a showdown. Quite a number of very clever people miscalculated during that last week in May: Mendès-France by implicitly laying claim to the Premiership without suggesting that the electorate might be consulted first; Mitterand by grotesquely describing the dissolution of parliament and the holding of new elections as "a call for civil war"; Giscard d'Estaing by trying to knife Pompidou; and Pompidou himself by temporarily eclipsing de Gaulle, thereby incurring his resentment, and ensuring his own fall. It is arguable that, next to de Gaulle, the Communists proved best able to ride the storm. Yet their tactical skill was too blatantly opportunist; and in June the voters showed what they thought of them.

For the party of Waldeck Rochet had managed to fall between two stools: it had done its best to seem respectable without reaping the expected electoral reward; looked at from the angle of its militants, it had surrendered its Leninist birthright for a mess of parliamentary pottage, and not even obtained a reward in the shape of greater voting strength. To this its apologists replied that the party had no option. Once de Gaulle made it clear that he would not yield to force, the only choice lay between silent acquiescence or a showdown which might result in something like civil war. That at least was how the Communist leadership saw it, and it probably did not need advice from Moscow to determine the decision in favor of legality. For whatever the Latin Quarter might think, the workers were not spoiling for a trial of strength with the armed forces. All they wanted was a grandiose repetition of the Popular Front experience of 1936; which is more or less what they got.

BUT WAS THERE not a third way? France after all—unlike Spain—is an industrial country where the working class carries real weight. Admittedly one Frenchman out of two still inhabits a commune of fewer than two thousand people: a circumstance often forgotten which tends to determine the outcome of parliamentary elections. But ten million workers were in occupation of factories and offices throughout the land; the army would never have moved against them (anyway soldiers cannot dig coal or pour steel); and there are only thirteen thousand five hundred CRS riot police in the whole of France: enough to hit a few students over the head, but hardly sufficient to battle ten million workers. If the Communist party and its trade-union federation, the CGT, had simply told the workers to sit tight and refuse to budge; better still, if they had told them to start production going again without bothering about the nominal owners: what would de Gaulle have done? Probably nothing at all. For the General in his own fashion is as pragmatic as they come, and if the unions had really shown themselves capable of running industry and keeping the trains moving, he would in all likelihood have called it "French socialism" and tried to take the credit for it. Alternatively, he might have packed up and gone back to Colombey. In either case France today would have had a socialized economy.

That in effect was what the Communists were told by their left-wing critics, and not by them alone. For there is reason to believe that the major Catholic union federation, the CFDT, was prepared to go along if the general strike escalated to the level of permanent factory occupation. And the managerial staffs, the celebrated *cadres* on whom in an emergency everything depends? No doubt they would at the start have professed deep indignation. But given resolute political leadership by the unions and the Left, they might have had second thoughts and decided to cooperate "in the public interest and to prevent an economic disaster" etc. At least it could have been *tried*. But the Communists never gave it a thought. All they could think of was a 10 per cent (or 15 per cent) wage hike, more power for union delegates in factories hitherto closed to them, and a parliamentary victory to follow, with themselves wrapped in the Tricolor and appearing as the saviors of society from "anarchy" and the "extremism" of the ultra-Left. To put it crudely, they behaved like a bunch of Social Democrats.

Viewed in retrospect, that is to say with the advantage of hindsight, it is plain enough that the Communists deliberately aborted the revolutionary movement on May 30th when—in the face of de Gaulle's determination to stay in power—they demobilized their followers. They did it quite

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simply by converting the general strike into a pressure campaign for higher wages and better working conditions. At one moment it had looked like a pre-revolutionary situation, but there was no Lenin lurking behind the *Confédération Générale du Travail*: only poor old Benoît Frachon who seemed genuinely shocked when on May 27th the Renault workers shouted his friend Séguy down (but they went back a month later, after they had extorted a better deal from the administration). From all this the Paris correspondent of the *Economist* characteristically concluded (on June 22nd) that the Communists had "acted like Fabians." In reality their union leaders at least behaved like the working-class Social Democrats they had become. The distinction may be a bit subtle, but it is real nonetheless. After all, the British trade-union leaders during the so-called "general strike" of 1926 (a ludicrous fiasco involving about 1,500,000 workers out of a total eight times that number) did not make a bid for political power either. For that matter, no labor movement in an industrial country has *ever* done more than try to get the best bargain it could from the employers (including the State where industry has been partly nationalized, as in France). What has occurred in France is quite simply that the CGT has taken over what is left of the old Stalinist rump: in other words the unions have turned the tables on the party. It was bound to happen in the long run and the only surprise is that it did not happen earlier.

THERE REMAINS a mystery—or rather an apparent mystery, for there is a perfectly simple answer to the question a lot of people on the Left have been asking since then: why did the Communists sabotage Mitterand's attempt to form a sort of interim government at the end of May, when for a few days it looked as though they could drive Pompidou (if not de Gaulle) from office? Such a government, though *backed* by the Communists, would not have been *dominated* by them. What was even worse from their standpoint, its effective leader would have been Mendès-France: the only political figure who at that moment was acceptable both to the extreme Left and to the wavering voters of the political Center. Had a government of this sort been formed, and had it then settled with the unions *on the basis of letting the workers have effective control of the factories,* the Left would probably have won the subsequent parliamentary elections. For what it has *always* lacked —and what de Gaulle possessed in the highest degree—was *authority*: the will and the ability to *govern,* to make its decisions stick, to impress upon the millions of uneasy provincial voters the image of an organized body of people capable of running the country at least as effectively as the Gaullist regime. But a victory of this kind, though it might actually have established something like a socialist system, would *not* have placed the Communists in power. For if there is one thing that unites most Frenchmen (including a good proportion of the Communist voters) it is the absolute determination *not* to install a dictatorship of the East European type. And since the French Communist party still cannot imagine any other form of rule, it does not inspire trust—not even among its allies of the "Federation of the Left." In fact these allies, when faced with the blunt choice between Gaullism and Communism, showed what they thought of it—by staying at home in droves during the second round of the parliamentary elections. They might have voted for Mendès-France—which is just why the Communists were determined to sabotage his candidacy at any cost—even at the cost of a parliamentary defeat.

III

COMMUNIST STRATEGY had taken shape even before Waldeck Rochet assumed the leadership after the death of Maurice Thorez in 1964. It was briefly tested in the Presidential elections of December 1965, when the Communists stood down in favor of Mitterand (who won almost 45 per cent of the popular vote on the second ballot), and confirmed in the parliamentary elections of March 1967, when the Federation of the Left and the Communists combined against the Gaullists and their allies. On that occasion the Pompidou government scraped home with a wafer-thin parliamentary majority, although in terms of actual popular support the Gaullists gained an additional two million votes: largely in the poor rural south and mainly at the expense of the conservative Old Right which was virtually wiped out, after having already suffered an electoral disaster in 1962 over Algeria. In the early months of 1968, the Federation (which did *not* include the P.S.U., but *did* include Guy Mollet's Socialists, as well as the surviving Radicals and Mitterand's own motley following) moved close to a formal alliance with the Communists. There was not as yet a joint program—merely a draft statement which underlined differences (e.g., over Europe and NATO) as well as agreed aims. It was clearly the purpose of the Communists to commit their partners to a joint platform, so as to pull them away from their potential allies in the so-called Center: a (largely Catholic and pro-European) grouping whose economic outlook was bourgeois-liberal in the traditional sense. To accomplish this aim it was vital to turn the CP into something it had never been in all the forty-eight years of its existence: a party that looked and sounded genuinely democratic and patriotic.

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On the eve of the great upheaval in May, Waldeck Rochet and his colleagues had reason to feel that they were making slow but steady progress. The Catholic intelligentsia was becoming friendlier, and so were the Christian trade unions which grouped something like a million workers. Christian-Communist philosophical debates were merely the visible tip of an iceberg floating toward something like peaceful coexistence between the Church and the party. *Le Monde,* the country's most important paper and the oracle of the entire intellectual and political elite, opened its columns to debates on Marxist philosophy. Political scientists like Maurice Duverger began to weigh the chances of a peaceful Socialist-Communist takeover in 1972, the probable date of the next parliamentary elections. Polls showed a slight majority of the voters willing to accept the presence of Communist ministers in a duly elected government. The internal evolution of the Italian Communist party gave encouragement to such notions. So did the fresh breezes blowing from Prague. *L'Humanité,* the party organ, began to edge away from Soviet orthodoxy. Its reporting from Eastern Europe increasingly followed a "Hungarian" line: midway between Polish neo-Stalinism and Czech revisionism. The party's official philosopher, Roger Garaudy, made polite bows in the direction of the Vatican. The official Communist publishing house issued a history of the Russian Revolution in which Trotsky was actually mentioned without being called a traitor. Its tame poet, Louis Aragon, publicly deplored the recent trials of Soviet intellectuals. The climate seemed set fair for an "Italian" experiment in respectability. True, the General was still there; but he was nearly seventy-eight, and M. Pompidou did not look like the sort of man who could fill his place when he was gone.

THE MAY upheaval, itself sparked almost accidentally by the student insurrection at Nanterre, put these calculations to the test. On the one hand, it set the working class in motion; on the other, it frightened the provincial middle class and the peasantry (traditionally inclined to regard all urban workers as overpaid loafers). It also gave the Gaullists an opportunity to revive the Red Bogey. But that was "politics" and to be expected: the more so since the General, while eloquent enough on television when describing the mortal peril threatening his beloved France, quite obviously did not believe a word of it, and indeed had no reason to, seeing that the party had been very cooperative while the factory occupation was on. It was no great surprise when M. Pompidou dragged up Mitterand's unconstitutional behavior, or when he depicted the Federation of the Left as the helpless tool of the "totalitarians" lurking in the wings. What was remarkable was the Communist response. So far from unfurling the Red banner, the party did its best to wrap itself in the Tricolor. To see and hear M. Waldeck Rochet on radio and television during the campaign, the chief outrage the Gaullists had committed was trying to steal the national flag "which belongs to us all!" The Communist party (said M. Waldeck Rochet, looking the viewer straight in the eye) was the party of democracy, republican legality, and national unity. If anyone was behaving improperly it was the Gaullists: they were splitting the country down the middle, telling the voters to choose between themselves and the Communists. What nonsense! There was no such choice! The Communist party (said M. Waldeck Rochet in his comfortable Burgundian peasant accent) did not demand power for itself. All it wanted was a fair share within a future government of the republican and democratic Left.

BUT THE GAULLISTS, plus their unreliable Giscardist allies, and the ever-wobbling Catholic democrats of the so-called Center (who still polled 10 per cent of the popular vote in last June's elections), were not the only bother. There had also arisen on the Communist party's other flank the specter of a radical ultra-Left. Some of it was distributed among the Anarchist, Trotskyist, Maoist, and Castroist organizations which bore the brunt of the street fighting with the CRS last May and June. The remainder was enrolled among the twenty thousand members of the left-wing Socialist (and therefore juts barely respectable) party of Mendès-France and Michel Rocard: the latter one of those bright young technocrats who, except for their philosophy, are barely distinguishable from the more left-wing Gaullists. What was to be done about these sudden apparitions? The Trotskyists and the rest were bad enough, but the government finally banned them, whereupon the party, at last, could breathe a sigh of relief. All through May *L'Humanité* had been lambasting the students for antagonizing peaceful citizens, and as late as June 7 the new secretary-general of the CGT, Georges Séguy, was still wondering aloud why the authorities tolerated these "troublemakers," whereupon the government took the hint and solemnly banned their (virtually non-existent) organizations.*

Séguy had only recently taken over from the

* See the *Nouvel Observateur* of June 12, especially Jean Daniel's hand-wringing editorial. M. Daniel had already found reason to complain about *L'Humanité*'s pro-Nasser line during the Israel-Arab Six-Day War last year. Séguy's denunciation of the "extremists" was almost—but not quite—too much for him. And yet in fairness one has to add that Georges Séguy joined the Resistance movement during the war at the age of 15, and had a spell in Mauthausen concentration camp. He is no ordinary labor bureaucrat—which makes the whole thing all the more significant.

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aging Benoît Frachon, for many years secretary-general of the *Confédération Générale du Travail* and a veteran of the Communist-led union movement. Both men were members of the Politbureau, sharing responsibility with Waldeck Rochet and the other party leaders in whose name Georges Marchais in *L'Humanité* had already denounced Cohn-Bendit in May as a "German anarchist," and in general sounded the patriotic and chauvinist note when the student revolt broke out. But that was before the workers followed suit: first by occupying the factories from May 15 onward, then by rejecting the wage agreements hastily negotiated by the CGT with the Pompidou government later that month (in the end they settled for a slightly amended version, which more or less brought their pay up to the West German level—at least on paper and not counting the effect on prices in the shops). By the time the election campaign got under way in June, the strike was virtually over and it was possible to go back to normal. This was the moment chosen by the party to proclaim its attachment to republican legality. (It got small thanks from the electorate, but that is another story). It was also the time for making it clear that the CP had no use for its left-wing allies. The students were bad enough, but Rocard with his P.S.U. was worse, and Mendès-France was intolerable. Had he not appeared at Charléty on May 27 under the red-and-black banners, while Pompidou and Séguy were jointly trying to get the strikers back to work? And now Rocard had dared to say that the Federation and the Communists ought to have kept the strike going until the government resigned! It was an outrage, said M. Waldeck Rochet (M. Mitterand thought so too).* The Communist party and the unions had behaved responsibly, Waldeck Rochet told the voters on television in his final pre-election broadcast. "The truth is that all through the grave events we have witnessed the French Communist party has conducted itself like a great party of progress, like a responsible party, conscious that it is the bearer of the hopes of millions of Frenchmen. We have deployed our entire activity in the service of the people, in broad daylight, within the framework of republican legality. . . ."†

Shades of August Bebel! Here was French Communism speaking the authentic language of German Social Democracy! But in France nothing is ever quite what it seems. For one thing, the party apparatus was still full of old Stalinists, quite capable of imposing a Novotny-type regime, given half a chance. And secondly, if the *Fédération de la Gauche* was a mishmash of old Socialists and bourgeois Radicals, the P.S.U. was not quite what it appears either. Not only was its titular leader an old Keynesian liberal, very recently converted to (non-Marxist) socialism: its energetic young secretary-general, Rocard, could easily pass for a Gaullist technocrat if he moved a fraction further to the Right. The fact is, the P.S.U. differs from the Communist party principally in that it has got rid of the awful deadweight of electoral Poujadism the CP still drags around with it. It doesn't have to worry about workers in declining industries or peasant-farmers in the South, because it doesn't represent either. What it *does* represent is the new technical intelligentsia whose Left-inclined representatives make up much of its membership (the remainder are Trotskyist or Guevarist students with nowhere else to go). In short, it is a typically "modern" formation, not unlike the Gaullists, and in competition with them for the same clientele. All of which is perfectly obvious to the Communists, especially to labor leaders like Frachon and Séguy, and not in the least to their liking. They know a revisionist when they see one (just as their Czech opposite-numbers do) and no sociologist has to tell them that if the P.S.U. ever takes over the leadership of the French Left, it will treat the Communists as so much political cannon-fodder. Which is not to say that Rocard was not in earnest when he urged the escalation of the general strike to the level of revolution. For all one knows it might even have worked; but the CP and the CGT had decided on the "parliamentary road to socialism," and anyway they didn't like a movement they had not started and over which they had no real control.

AND SO THE Gaullists stayed in power and were even swept back with a greatly increased majority, on a wave of law-and-order sentiment that came rolling up from the depths, and that cost the Federation and the Communists votes on *both* flanks, while the P.S.U. nearly doubled its share at the expense of its allies. With a mere 4.4 million votes out of 22 million on the first ballot—where the parties strike bargains for the run-off—the Communists were back to the old ratio of 20 per cent they have had for most of the past decade, and the Federation was even worse off, having likewise lost both votes and percentage points. Compared with March 1967, when the united Left came within reasonable sight of an electoral majority, the setback was serious enough to call into question the entire strategy pursued over the past few years—and this quite irrespective of the altogether disproportionate redistribution of parliamentary seats, which could be explained away as a temporary

* See *Le Monde* of June 23-24 for their declarations.

† *Le Monde*, June 23-24, reporting the party leader's broadcast of June 21st. It is worth noting that all the opposition parties, including the P.S.U., had full access to radio and television facilities over the official State radio, the ORTF, as well as the independent stations located in Luxembourg and Monte Carlo.

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disaster. There just is not, it would seem, a popular majority for democratic socialism, but that is the old dilemma of the French Left. In this sense at least very little has changed.

IV

THE FIGURES—if one is going to talk in these terms—are eloquent enough. From 1924 to 1956, Communists, Socialists, and Radicals together always held a majority of the popular vote, although it was of course unequally divided among them, with the old-style Republican Radicals gradually losing ground, especially after Mendès-France had left them. In 1958, when de Gaulle came in, the entire Left (including the Radicals) polled 43.41 per cent of the total vote in the legislative elections that year. In 1962 their combined percentage was slightly less: 42.82 per cent. In March 1967 (when the Gaullists nearly lost their parliamentary majority through overconfidence and indolence on the second ballot) the entire Left polled only a very slightly higher percentage of the total vote than it had done in November 1962: 43.51 per cent. By June this year it was down to 41.22 per cent, of which about half went to the Communists, the remainder to the Federation and the P.S.U. The latter polled nearly a million votes and did especially well in Paris, where they ran the Federation a close second and took some votes away from the Communists. The CP also lost ground in the industrial regions of the North—but to the Gaullists! It would seem that tens of thousands of workers (and their wives) transferred their votes from the Communists to de Gaulle's party, in protest against Communist pressure tactics during the factory occupation, when in many places the CP and the CGT prevented the holding of secret ballots on whether or not to go with the strike. For the rest, the Gaullist "Union for the Defense of the Republic" made solid gains almost everywhere, notably in the Paris region, but likewise in the traditionally Radical-Socialist South. It ran slightly ahead of the P.S.U. in a straw poll taken among young people of pre-voting age. There may be some significance in the fact that among these young men and women of eighteen to twenty-one, only the Gaullists and the Mendèsists scored heavily, while the "old" parties (including the Communists) lagged considerably behind.*

On the morning after, everyone reacted in standard fashion: the Gaullists by celebrating their victory and ascribing it to the good sense of the voters; the Center by congratulating itself that it had not lost more heavily; the Socialists by blaming the result on the Red scare; and the Communists by blaming the left-wing extremists: some of them (according to René Andrieu in *L'Humanité*) clearly in the pay of the police. . . . "Every barricade, every car set on fire, brought tens of thousands of votes to the Gaullist party," according to the editorialist of the Communist daily. Very likely there was something in this, but the writer forgot to mention that there were no barricades in the North, where the CP nonetheless lost heavily in factory and mining districts—not to the P.S.U., but to the Gaullists. The truth is always more complex, and more interesting, than propagandist fiction, but this is a lesson the Communists still have to learn, and not only in France.

WHAT OF THE victors? They have won a respite that should carry them through the critical four or five years while the conversion of France into a modern industrial country is finally accomplished. One of the principal factors in the May explosion was the sudden discharge of resentments accumulated during a decade when France was making very rapid economic and technical progress not accompanied by anything in the nature of major structural changes in the society. To cite only the best publicized instance of all: while the number of students nearly trebled, the number of jobs available for them did not, and the educational system remained as rigid and centralized as before. The result, as usual in French history, was a spontaneous uprising in default of something less dramatic. This has happened before. In fact one may say that it happens regularly in France about once in every generation. For this reason alone it will not do to treat this year's crisis as merely a link in a chain of world-wide "student unrest." There is a roughly similar situation in the West German

* For some of these figures see *Le Monde* of July 16, quoting M. François Goguel, secretary-general of the Senate and professor at the Institute of Political Studies. *L'Express* of July 8-14 has a slightly different set of figures. According to the calculations of its electoral statisticians, the three parties of the traditional "Left" polled 65 per cent of the total popular vote in 1945, 59 per cent in 1946, 54.5 per cent in 1951, 53 per cent in 1956, 46 per cent in 1958, 44 per cent in 1962, 43.5 per cent in 1967, and 40.5 per cent in the first round of the June 1968 elections. Whichever set of figures one accepts, the Left has seen its following steadily shrink since 1945. This circumstance encourages anti-parliamentary tendencies among old syndicalists and youthful Trotskyists alike. But they will have to explain how one can get the workers to go through with a factory occupation *and with the actual running of industry and transport* the next time there is a general strike. For an interesting discussion of this topic see Serge Mallet in the *Nouvel Observateur* of July 15-21, where incidentally he also shows in detail how the CGT leaders systematically aimed at compromise with the government, while at the same time equally systematically wrecking the chances of a joint coalition government of all the Socialist parties. In brief, the Communists acted neither in a revolutionary nor in a genuinely reformist manner, for *they could have had a legal Socialist government had they wanted it.* What they really did want was to go on being the official opposition to the Gaullist regime—forever, it seems.

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universities, but no such social tinder lying about. For one thing, the West German working class has no revolutionary tradition; for another thing, it has absolutely no use for students coming from middle-class homes (95 per cent in the *Bundesrepublik*).

Above all, there is the function, or malfunction, of the French political system. On this topic a great deal of nonsense has been talked by people who have taken no trouble to inquire how the system actually works. I shall therefore cite one of the few contemporary historians deeply versed in this abominably complex subject, Mr. Philip Williams. In his newly published book *The French Parliament 1958-67*,* Mr. Williams has this to say:

> The French parliament today is much weaker than the Congress of the United States and somewhat weaker than the British House of Commons. But under the Third and Fourth Republics it was far stronger than either. In contrast to the United States, the French government was responsible to the legislature; in contrast to Britain, the French legislature remained so predominant that for nearly eighty years no ministry dared dissolve. British cabinets were formed by the leaders of the majority party and its discipline gave them power over their nominal parliamentary masters; but in France, government and parliament alike were paralyzed by the number of small parties, the individualism of their members, and the fragility of their coalitions. Moreover, unlike Britain and the United States, France had emerged only recently from authoritarian rule and there were always strong political forces on the far Right or Left (usually both at once) which wanted to scrap the democratic system and revert to autocracy.

To which one may add that the system functioned, more or less, as long as *laissez-faire* was paramount and the government of the day did as little as possible. It ceased to work when the State became the dominant partner in the economy: a change dating from the Second World War. Ever since then, the problem of marrying a centrally planned economy to a parliamentary system has been the key issue, and for this very reason it has rarely been discussed in public. Certainly the Communists have not discussed it—for the simple reason that they thought it best to keep quiet about such dangerous topics until they were safely installed in power. The "Old Left" has kept silent too, and so have the Conservatives and Liberals of the Old Right. Only two groups in French political life have offered a solution: the Gaullists and the P.S.U. Not suprisingly, these are the only political formations which in recent years have had a following among the "technical intelligentsia" and among the young. The others are stagnating and the Communist party is the most stagnant of them all.

For to make the system work it is necessary for the political parties to transcend their class origins; and while the Gaullists have not been very good at this (they still include far too many people who ought to be made to join some conservative outfit), they have at least seen the problem: as in their own fashion have the less benighted members of the P.S.U. The Communists not only have not seen it: they refuse to admit its existence. For the day they did, they would have to acknowledge that the working class by itself cannot run a modern economy. Stalin discovered this by experience (and murdered those who stood in the way), but Stalinism is no longer tolerable. As for the Czech example—leadership by a liberalized Communist party including both the technical intelligentsia and an elite of the working class—it is all very well, but it presupposes the actual possession of power: just what the French situation denies them. On balance, therefore, the choice lies between Gaullism (which is simply nationalism married to a reforming technocracy, and kept going by the charismatic appeal of a national hero, now on the point of becoming an historical monument) or some version of democratic socialism. For the time being, the transformation is still being undertaken in the sign of nationalism. When the Left gets its chance, the success or failure of the experiment will depend on whether it has learned its lesson.

THE LESSON, so far as France is concerned, seems to be that Alexander Dubcek is more relevant than Fidel Castro. The new model is being fabricated in Prague, not in Havana. But this notion will never set the *Quartier Latin* on fire. For even if the Communists finally get the message, the Maoists and Castroites among the students won't. Too bad, one cannot please everyone. For the next five years anyway the Gaullists are safe, and can amuse themselves by toying with "participation" and citing papal encyclicals (or for that matter the writings of Proudhon, if they want an authentic French socialist to play off against Marx and Lenin) to the effect that the workers are entitled to a share of the profit. The General cannot, one must suppose, live forever, but as long as he is around, his party can count on the voters, and he himself no doubt can count on the loyalty of his new Prime Minister. There is perhaps something faintly anachronistic about the spectacle of two elderly aristocrats—one a Catholic conservative with vague notions derived from the romantic anti-capitalism of his favorite authors, the other a perfect specimen of the Protestant *haute bourgeoisie*—setting out to find a "middle road" between capitalism and Communism. One does not quite see M.

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Couve de Murville in that role—but perhaps he is just being groomed for the Presidential succession, while the task of providing Gaullism with the social gospel it has hitherto lacked is left to younger men who have won their spurs in the various socialist parties and sects (there are a number of them around—one wonders how much elbow room they will get). The Gaullist party is probably less conservative than its own voters—another of those troubling paradoxes. And anyway it now confronts a decapitated Left, for Mendès-France had the rug pulled from under him very effectively by the Communist organization at Grenoble which made sure he would lose his seat to the Gaullists (while a section of the local bourgeoisie perversely voted *for* him because they were proud of his national standing).* All very odd, but then France is not an easy country to understand. It is also a country that suffers from consistent misreporting by ignorant or hostile correspondents, particularly in the English-language press (the Continental Europeans are better served in this respect). How many people outside France are aware that Mendès-France in 1962 proposed the conversion of the Senate into a Second Chamber representing the citizens not in their individual role as voters, but in their corporate capacity as members of economic or social organizations? Or that the Gaullists "borrowed" this idea from him? Or that the P.S.U. leadership is trying to be simultaneously to the Right and to the Left of the CP? Or that its long-range strategy aims at an alliance with the Catholic unions, whose leaders in some cases are now more radical than the Communists, but also closer to de Gaulle. . . . One could go on forever. If there is one certainty about the 1968 French upheaval, it is that it figures among the least understood and worst reported events in recent European history.

* See *L'Express* of July 1-7 for an analysis of the voting results.

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Why the Poor People's Campaign Failed

Tom Kahn

IT WAS ONLY a few years ago that Michael Harrington wrote, in *The Other America*, that a chief characteristic of the poor was their invisibility. The white middle class had designed its neighborhoods and traffic arteries to bypass the slums; the combined forces of urban renewal and the private housing market operated to push the poor, especially Negroes, out of view and into more densely packed ghettos. Thus there grew up a physical and cultural barrier which, it was agreed, had to be penetrated if the nation's conscience was to be awakened.

Between the publication of *The Other America* and the appearance of Resurrection City in Washington this year, a great deal happened, and it is doubtful that the poor can any longer be described as invisible in the old sense. To be sure, they have not been integrated into the economic mainstream, there is still little daily contact with the affluent majority (except in laboratory settings), and there has certainly been no basic shift in power relations. But if the poor still do not exist for us as real individuals, their collective condition has nevertheless been thrust actively into the political arena. Every schoolboy knows that there are poor people in America, that a disproportionate number of them are black, that they live in deteriorating slums and ghettos, and that there is among them a growing militance and indignation; he knows as well that there is an urban crisis in this country which is characterized by high unemployment in the slums, disorder in the schools, crime, violence, and dope in the streets. And he also knows, if he is at all alert, that there is evident today a measure of organized effort in behalf of the poor that, while still meager and ineffective, goes beyond what might have been predicted a short time ago.

Now it seems appropriate to question the notion, implicit in so much meliorist thinking, that the recognition of a problem is its solution. The affluent majority, once shown the face of poverty, can react in alternative ways. After all, to make a not irrelevant comparison, peace in Vietnam is the stated (and probably genuine) goal both of those who advocate unilateral U.S. withdrawal and of those who call for a military victory. Similarly, all are agreed that poverty in America must be eliminated, but while one approach to the problem is to work for guaranteed jobs and income, another is to conclude from recent events that the poor are their own worst enemy, and that they must be repressed into respect for law and order as a precondition for receiving any advances that the future might hold. There is, in short, nothing in the faces of the poor themselves that will necessarily inspire the sympathy or supportive political action of the majority; poverty can just as easily inspire fear and revulsion.

These thoughts have been occasioned by the Poor People's Campaign of 1968, a project which has been attacked more widely, and with more contempt, than any "radical" action in years—with the *possible* exception of the incredible New Politics Convention in Chicago last year. It is precisely for this reason that one hesitates to discuss the Poor People's Campaign seriously—which necessarily means critically. Nonetheless, the discussion must take place, for the campaign embodied ideas and techniques that have been evolving over the past five years, that therefore speak directly to our political and social experience in those years, and that, finally, are likely to manifest themselves again and again in the crucial months ahead. The discussion properly begins with some notes on the history of the Poor People's Campaign, and in particular on the role played in the campaign by Bayard Rustin. For if the Poor People's Campaign failed to produce its desired impact—and most agree that it did—then the reasons for that failure, as well as its ultimate significance, must be traced in large measure to the debate which took place last April and May between Rustin and the campaign leadership.

II

LATE IN 1967, when Dr. Martin Luther King first put forth the notion of a Spring Protest in Washington, he and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference had already experienced several disappointments in their effort to transplant their Southern-born movement to the Northern ghettos. They had so far been unable to duplicate in the big cities of the North the relatively swift and dramatic victories they had won in the South. For one thing, the high-flown, basically optimistic rhetoric of the Southern Baptist minister failed to penetrate the bitter

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alienation and social breakdown of the big ghettos. Then, too, the opposition was politically much more sophisticated, often showing a deceptively amiable countenance; the Daley machine in Chicago was a far different animal from Bull Connor. Above all, the changes being sought were socio-economic in nature, and hence far less easily attainable through traditional non-violent, direct-action methods than had been, say, the desegregation of public accommodations, a relatively straightforward political goal.

SCLC was not the only civil-rights organization confronted by these problems, but in some ways it was the one least suited to adjust to them. The Congress of Racial Equality, originally dominated by white pacifist-radicals, was going through a series of internal upheavals, and engaged in turning toward various versions of black nationalism in search of a base in the black community. The National Urban League, long regarded as the most conservative of the civil-rights groups, had fashioned a more militant image under the leadership of Whitney Young, while maintaining its ties with enlightened big business. The NAACP, with some four hundred fifty thousand members (the great majority of them black), was continuing to shoulder the legal burden but turning its attention increasingly to economic issues. (Perhaps because it is made up of some one thousand six hundred chapters throughout the country, the NAACP can vary its strategic emphases in a functional way at the local level, without requiring sudden alterations at the national level.)

Unlike these organizations, SCLC existed as the extension of one man, Dr. King. It had, and has, no membership, no regularly functioning groups (as opposed to projects) in local communities. Consequently, when SCLC workers entered a community, they often appeared as "outsiders," and were unable to attract an enduring following loyal to SCLC. The "membership" of SCLC, like that of SNCC, is its staff, now reported at 125 full-time workers. But whereas an organization like SNCC could throw out its founding leadership and, with the election of a Stokely Carmichael or an H. Rap Brown, transform the organization from top to bottom, SCLC obviously could not.

In short, the structure of SCLC and the towering figure of its leader precluded it from making the changes undertaken by other civil-rights groups. (I leave aside here any evaluation of these changes.) But the pressures and frustrations that were building up in the entire movement were felt in SCLC as well. The Chicago project of 1966 had clearly failed, and the mass media, searching out "authentic" voices of the violent ghetto, were increasingly spotlighting young black militants. Inevitably, some of the SCLC staff became restive, worried that they were losing touch with the new currents and fearful that their own inspirational gifts were becoming obsolete. (As anyone knows who has known Southern Baptist ministers, each and every member of the SCLC leadership believes that his role is divinely inspired and divinely to inspire.) The presence of Dr. King served to prevent these frustrations and internal conflicts from erupting into public view. But there is evidence that the declining morale of the SCLC staff was in the back of his mind as he made plans for the Poor People's Campaign of 1968.

FROM THE beginning, the plans were not very clear, and a debate on tactics took place among the members of King's "think tank"—an informal group outside of the SCLC structure that met irregularly at King's request. One member of the group was Bayard Rustin, the leading tactician of the civil-rights movement and now executive director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, whose relationship with King dated back to the Montgomery Bus Protest in the mid-50's.

In a detailed three-page memorandum to King dated January 29, 1968, Rustin outlined a series of suggestions for the strategy and tactics of the Spring Protest (as it was then called). He proposed that the project center on economic questions, and that the aims be stated in two parts, the first encompassing long-range demands "not necessarily expected to be obtained now, such as guaranteed income for those who cannot work and public works at decent wages . . . for those who can," and the second dealing with immediate demands for "jobs, housing, welfare, and passage of a strong civil-rights bill."

In urging a list of specific, "realizable" demands, Rustin argued that

> . . . failure to achieve some major victories in the nation's capital at this time will, I believe, increase frustration nationally. These demands should be broad enough to insure some of them being won soon. . . .
>
> I do not believe it is possible to attract sufficient numbers to the nation's capital unless, far in advance, the strategy and tactics have fully been made clear to all concerned. We are not now in the period we were in in 1963, at the time of Selma, Birmingham, and the March on Washington, when there was absolute clarity in everyone's mind as to objectives. . . . Not only do I feel it is essential that those being called into Washington know precisely what they are being called into, but I believe it is important that those in Government should have a very clear picture of aims, strategy and tactics.

Thus the issue of specific as opposed to general demands—an issue that was later to flare into public controversy—was raised by Rustin as early as January of this year. In the same memorandum, Rustin argued against the use of disruptive tactics in Washington:

> Given the mood in Congress, given the increasing backlash across the nation, given the

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fact that this is an election year, and given the high visibility of a protest movement in the nation's capital, I feel that any effort to disrupt transportation, government buildings, etc., can only lead, in this atmosphere, to further backlash and repression.

Such tactics will, I believe, fail to attract persons dedicated to nonviolence but, on the other hand, attract elements that cannot be controlled, and who on the contrary will converge on the project with a variety of objectives in mind other than those of civil rights. . . .

I believe you should address a series of mass meetings across the country outlining clearly your plan, in order to set the tone for the Washington demonstration in advance so that certain elements would have no excuse for converging on Washington without clarity. I sincerely believe that unless this is done, many individuals could become severe problems once they are in Washington.

These excerpts effectively refute the charge, subsequently made, that Rustin had pooh-poohed the whole idea of the project. In fact, his memo recommended a number of concrete and positive tactical steps that King might take to safeguard the project from the dangers Rustin foresaw. For he did have deep reservations about the project and candidly told King so. "There is in my mind," he wrote, "a ver yreal question . . . whether SCLC can maintain control and discipline over [the Spring Protest] even if the methods used are limited to constitutional and nonviolent tactics."

TWO MONTHS LATER, Martin Luther King was assassinated. Rustin, shattered by grief, flew immediately to Memphis to organize the march begun by King on behalf of the sanitation workers. He brought the young militants, who had disrupted the earlier King march, into positions of responsibility as marshals; the resulting demonstration was a massive, inspiring tribute to the slain leader. Returning home to New York three sleepless days later, Rustin experienced one of those grotesque assaults by which certain publicists of the New Left earn their daily bread—a *Village Voice* article by Jack Newfield denouncing him for opposing King's Poor People's Campaign.*

While in Memphis, Rustin had told Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, King's successor, that he would be available for consultation on the logistics of the Poor People's Campaign. In the ensuing weeks the Campaign hit snag after snag. There were delays in getting contingents out of the South, and the first groups to arrive in Washington found arrangements incomplete at Resurrection City. In mid-May, harassed and frazzled, Abernathy telephoned Rustin and implored him to take over responsibility for the one-day Mobilization in support of the Poor People's Campaign, then scheduled for May 30. Rustin resisted, on the grounds that there was opposition to him in the SCLC staff and that his entry might stir internal bickering which Abernathy could ill afford so soon after succeeding King. (In a meeting of the "think tank" two years earlier, Rustin had incurred the wrath of some SCLC staffers by arguing against King's going into Chicago.) Abernathy was not to be dissuaded, however. He pledged that Rustin, as national coordinator, would have full authority over the Mobilization, and said he would see to it that the SCLC staff cooperated. Finally, Rustin agreed to meet with Abernathy and his key aides in Washington on May 19.

Rustin, accompanied by his assistant, Norman Hill, went to the meeting with a set of fourteen points which were his precondition for accepting Abernathy's request. He stipulated, among other things, that he have full authority for the Mobilization, including selection of staff and marshals; that the Mobilization be postponed to mid-June; that there be no disruption of government functions on the day of the Mobilization; that participation in the Mobilization be based on adherence to democracy, integration, and the strategy of nonviolence; and that "in addition to stating the broad objectives of the Poor People's Campaign for guaranteed jobs and income, the one-day Mobilization will project specific concrete demands. It will be made clear that these demands do not represent the full programs of the SCLC."

The fourteen points were agreed to, and on May 24 Rustin and Abernathy held a press conference to announce Rustin's appointment as national coordinator and the postponement of the Mobilization to June 19. In Abernathy's presence Rustin reiterated that "the Mobilization will not

* Michael Harrington has adequately dealt with Newfield in the *Voice*, but it is surely time to inquire, if only in an aside, exactly what is the craft of the Newfields of this world. Are they intellectual leaders of a movement? But they have inspired no movement; nobody follows them. Are they journalists? No one—Left, Right, or Center—would accept without further verification the "facts" they offer. Are they, then, astute political commentators whose analyses of events we find useful for informed judgments? I do not know a single soul, literally, who would anchor his political views in the subjective, extremely personal, and forever shifting sands of their prejudices. What, then, is the art they practice? They play a dual role. With regard to the radical activists, they are sponges which drink in the movement's gossip; their ears prick up at the slightest sound of a split, a sellout, a heretical tactic. In the process, they convince themselves of their own instinctively correct radicalism and at the same time constitute themselves as a credentials committee for the American Left, such as it is. They keep out impurities, these righteous arbiters of radicalism, and in so doing evade scrutiny of their own specific contributions. The second aspect of their role—what makes it professionally feasible, since the activist Left will not pay for their services—is the ideological entertainment they provide for a growing section of the swinging middle class. Political beachcombers like Newfield provide such people with a running commentary on who's "in" and who's "out" in the radical world, thus allowing them to feel engaged without budging too much. For this product his consumers reward him with a wage and some little renown.

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content itself with defining general social goals. It will make specific demands which can, and must be, immediately translated into law by congressional action and Executive order."

What Rustin had in mind became clear nine days later when he issued, under his and Abernathy's names, the official Mobilization "Call." The "Call" covered the general long-range goals of the Poor People's Campaign under an "Economic Bill of Rights" that would guarantee full employment, decent wages, and an adequate income for the unemployed. It went on to list specific "attainable" demands to be made to the Congress and the President—e.g., creation of one million public service jobs; adoption of the Housing and Urban Development Act; repeal of punitive welfare restrictions; collective bargaining rights for farm workers; more funds for anti-poverty programs; expanded food distribution; etc.

There was an immediate favorable reaction on Capitol Hill, as the "Call" gave congressional liberals some concrete legislative goals to work for. It was clear that the Poor People would not be allowed to remain in Washington indefinitely; the liberals were hoping that if the Campaign could achieve some victories, a graceful withdrawal could be effected. Publication of the "Call," along with news of Rustin's appointment, also brought in support from unions, church groups, and liberal organizations, which had earlier been uneasy over the prospect of confusion and possible violence in Washington.

The fears entertained by these groups were not entirely groundless. On the day before the Abernathy-Rustin press conference, eighteen Campaigners were arrested in an unscheduled demonstration at the office of Wilbur Mills, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, an indication that SCLC was having trouble controlling the Campaign. It was also having trouble with its own staff. On the day the "Call" was issued, Rev. Hosea Williams, an Abernathy lieutenant, proclaimed at a rally: "The picnic is over. . . . The police want to use those billies. Well, we're going to give them a chance."

WHILE RUSTIN'S New York office was preparing newspaper ads, printing instruction manuals, and getting endorsements and bus commitments from national organizations, the Washington situation continued to deteriorate. Two days after the issuance of the "Call," Hosea Williams called a press conference and denounced the document as "a bunch of jazz and foolishness." He said it was "unauthorized" and asserted, furthermore, that Rustin was merely a "public-relations man" for the Mobilization. On the same day, one hundred demonstrators confronted Attorney General Ramsey Clark at the Department of Justice. In words similar to those used by Hosea Williams at the rally on June 2, one of the demonstrators shouted: "Mr. Ramsey Clark, you better tell the police to get their guns ready because we're ready. For every one of us you kill in Resurrection City, ten cities are going to burn, 'cause we ain't got nothing to lose."

The next day, in response to Williams's statements, Rustin released the full text of the 14-point agreement to the press and insisted that the "Call" had been cleared with Rev. Abernathy and the Executive Vice-President of SCLC, Rev. Andrew Young. Meanwhile, the press reported Abernathy as saying, "I did not authorize and neither did I issue" the "Call."* Apparently forgetting one of the fourteen points he had agreed to, Abernathy added, "I do not think it is comprehensive enough to cover the demands of the Poor People's Campaign. I go along with some of his [Rustin's] ideas, but I think it's got to be broader." Abernathy made no comment on Hosea Williams's charge that Rustin had no authority over the Mobilization.

Rustin's phones were flooded with calls from people whose participation in the Mobilization had been predicated on the assumption that he would be in charge. Some groups indicated they would suspend activity until some clarification were offered. Federal authorities refused to give final approval to the line of march until it became certain that Rustin or someone else had authority to sign contracts. Meanwhile, Rustin had been trying for three days to reach Abernathy by phone, by telegram, and through intermediaries—without success. Then, on June 6, Rustin announced he was suspending his role in the Mobilization pending word from Abernathy affirming the fourteen points and Rustin's authority. (During this time, it was learned, Abernathy was tied up in all-night staff meetings at which a principal topic was the firing of Rustin—reportedly a move demanded by representatives of CORE and some peace groups.)

Finally, the next morning, Abernathy called Rustin and offered to convene a press conference to reaffirm Rustin's full authority as national coordinator. Rustin proposed that the press conference be preceded by a meeting which would include Hosea Williams and several other SCLC staff members who were known to be hostile to Rustin's role. Unless they were a party to the agreement, Rustin felt, there would be no way of putting a stop to their sniping. Abernathy

* About two days before the "Call" went to the printer, I read its text to Rev. Young, with Rustin on the line. Young had some criticisms, and the document was modified accordingly. One of his suggestions—that the reference to integration be deleted—Rustin opposed as a pull-back from the fourteen points. Rustin proposed a conference call with Abernathy for midnight, and Young agreed to arrange it. When, by 4 A.M., Abernathy had not called, Rustin wired him, complaining of the breakdown in communications and stating that the "Call" had to be at the printer by noon the following day. Some twenty-four hours after the deadline, Abernathy called to say he couldn't understand what the fuss was about as he had full confidence in Rustin and knew the "Call" would be O.K.

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argued that Rustin's proposal would weaken his position as the leader of SCLC, and he reiterated that he could keep his staff in line. Rustin replied that he thought Abernathy would be ill-advised to risk internal conflict by trying to discipline his staff and that in any case he, Rustin, did not want to be a cause of factionalism within SCLC. This impasse having been reached, Rustin told Abernathy that he was resigning, but that he would be available, behind the scenes, to help in any way Abernathy wanted. (In the following days, Rustin turned over all of the Mobilization bus lists and files to Sterling Tucker—Washington director of the Urban League, whom Abernathy had appointed as Rustin's successor—and sent $4000 he had raised to SCLC for the sound system in Washington.)

The Monday following his resignation, Rustin attended a meeting of liberal organizations, which had originally been convened to discuss Mobilization plans for June 19. He explained his reasons for resigning, but declined to participate in the ensuing discussion about what these groups should now do.

III

It is not easy to evaluate a demonstration like the June 19 Mobilization. Indeed, the value of any large demonstration is not to be measured solely by its immediate results. Also important is its effect on the participants—on their morale and on their willingness to work harder once they have returned home. Reactions, whether friendly or hostile, can take a while to register.

Yet it must be said that there is so far little evidence that the Mobilization made an impact. Although a turnout of fifty thousand people—the official estimate—is not to be sneered at, it is not momentous in these days of giant rallies. Inevitable comparisons have been made with the March on Washington of 1963, which drew nearly a quarter of a million people. It is true that the Mobilization had much less time in which to prepare, but it also enjoyed more initial support than did the 1963 March. Whereas the Kennedy administration had tried to get the March called off, the Johnson administration was favorably disposed to the Mobilization, albeit for its own reasons (it hoped that the June 19 rally would afford the residents of Resurrection City an opportunity to withdraw with dignity). Nor did the '63 March have the open support of an organized bloc of liberal congressmen like the one which worked with SCLC. Finally, the constituent organizations of the civil-rights movement had, since 1963, become more experienced in the techniques of mobilizing their members for rallies and demonstrations.

The point here is not that the Mobilization was inferior to the 1963 March but that it did not live up to its own potential. A number of organizations that had planned to send large delegations finally dispatched only token representation. Nor was there a large turnout from Washington itself, where the majority of the population is black.

On Capitol Hill, the impact of the Poor People's Campaign was hardly productive of beneficial results. Perhaps nothing could have moved the 90th Congress to act—not even the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy had induced it to pass adequate gun-control laws—and certainly many of the congressmen who harangued against the Campaign needed no excuse to oppose aid to the poor. Nevertheless, the fact remains that if the Campaign were to win substantial victories, it would have had to serve as a massive lever of support for the liberal faction in Congress. This, in effect, was the role of the 1963 March in winning passage of the 1963 Civil Rights Act. But the Campaign actually served the opposite purpose. It not only became an embarrassment to congressional liberals but, in the view of many Washington observers, it diverted attention away from the crucial battle over appropriations—including appropriations for poverty programs—that was then being waged in Congress. Instead of calling the nation's attention to this debate, the Poor People's Campaign succeeded in focusing attention mainly on itself and on the residents of Resurrection City. And that was the most damaging effect of all.

"Resurrection City itself," said *Newsweek*, "conceived as a model of communal living, had fallen into a true-to-life squalor—an ill-housed, ill-fed, self-segregated, absentee-run slum afflicted with low morale, deepening restiveness, and free-floating violence." A poignant account, printed in the New York *Post* on June 20, came from Alvin Jackson, who resigned as chief security marshal for the Mobilization:

> There is rape, robbery, and cuttings every day, and there is nothing we can do about it even if we catch the guys who did it. . . . There are about 20 guns in Resurrection City. There are lead pipes, knives, and Molotov cocktails in there. . . . The reason they leave is that men are getting tired of coming home from a day's picketing to find their belongings stolen or their wife raped.

Not even the most cynical observer can deny that one of the greatest resources of the civil-rights movement has been its moral capital, its "soul power." Resurrection City was dubbed the "City of Hope." Rev. Andrew Bevel of SCLC had described the Poor People's Campaign as "political group psychiatry." In his words, "Sometimes in psychiatry the patients get mad and run away. This time we are not going to let the patients get mad and run away. We're going to make them

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well, man. We're also educators, and when people are educated and get rid of their emotional problems, they will hear us" (New York *Times*, May 19).

A month later, as if in reply to Bevel, the *Wall Street Journal* could say:

> . . . as the reports of rape and robbery at Resurrection City began to seep out, not only were the public's fears of violence confirmed but an even stronger emotion came into play. After all, the Campaigners were people who were condemning American society, in toto or in part, as "racist" and "sick." And what values were they offering as substitutes? Not equality and justice, but robbery and rebellion against all authority by any means.

It is easy for sophisticated liberals and radicals to dismiss this as self-righteous moralizing from the ruling class. And it must be said, in this connection, that nothing that occurred in Resurrection City was as contemptible as the outcry of those right-wing congressmen who demanded that this transplanted microcosmic slum be torn down, but who are perfectly content to let the nation's real slums—of whose misery and pathology Resurrection City was but a symbol—remain intact. But then again, I have seen the contrary argument advanced—that precisely the most progressive development of the last five years has been that the "real" Negro has come to the surface, with all his scars and hostilities painfully visible. According to this argument, which I have had repeated occasion to hear, the Poor People's Campaign was "more real" and "more true" than the 1963 March because it forced white America to see the conditions of ghetto life, not an idealized image of cheerful black-and-white togetherness.

There is a sense in which this argument rings true, for it speaks to a certain naive, idealized integrationist view of the Negro which is dangerous because it is so easily bruised by an acquaintance with reality; and once bruised, it can rapidly turn into its ugly opposite. But if we are to proceed with this style of reasoning, it is appropriate to scrutinize another stereotype which is equally dangerous—that of the heroic slum proletariat.

Too many radical intellectuals have transferred to the lumpenproletariat the sentimental image of the proletariat that was fashionable in this country in the 1930's. Today's lumpenproletariat, like yesterday's worker, is viewed by these thinkers as an inherently progressive social force. In my own view, the proletariat had, and has, many more "progressive" virtues than does the lumpenproletariat—that is, if the word "progressive" is shorn of its romantic foolishness. The working class, as Daniel P. Moynihan has pointed out, possesses an often overlooked social cohesiveness, a class identity, a culture and a moral system based largely on its more stable economic role. The lumpenproletariat lacks these qualities because it is not quite a class at all but a collection of subgroups divided by ethnic, racial, linguistic, and geographical factors.*

In any case, and more to the point, I am not sure that classes are progressive—or reactionary—in and of themselves, but only in relation to their social roles. If we leave aside life-style preferences for the moment, the working class may be said to be progressive in that it seeks, with varying degrees of success, to democratize the distribution of social wealth. Or, if you prefer, the bourgeoisie can be considered progressive in that it has revolutionized technology. (Needless to say, each of these classes can have—indeed, does have—reactionary features as well.) The standard is the transformative effect on society itself.

Now, the lumpenproletariat can be progressive to the extent that, by pressing its own demands for a larger piece of the action, it succeeds in reducing or abolishing poverty and inequality in society as a whole. Yet because it is a sub-class, internally fragmented and extremely marginal to the political process, the lumpenproletariat is the least capable of playing an independent role. It must choose from among the directions laid before society by other social forces. In terms of political action, this means some kind of coalition.

There is, to be sure, one superficially "independent" role that the lumpenproletariat can play—a nihilistic battle against society itself that involves massive rioting, burning, looting, killing. But behavior of this kind can only redound to the advantage of other forces. In the United States, where urban guerrilla warfare will not be endured, the response will be repression and a turn to the Right. Such a turn to the Right, toward the forces of reaction, is already obvious.

Thus, it is not enough to "tell it like it is," to rub the noses of the affluent in the pathology of the slum. It is especially not enough when society as a whole is confused and divided, when liberal forces are disoriented, the backlash is growing in severity, and when extremism at both ends of the spectrum takes on profoundly anti-civil-libertarian, almost Fascist, features. At such a time the paramount need is for clear programmatic alternatives and for tactics that will maximize the size and cohesion of the democratic liberal-radical forces. Measured by the extent of that need, the Poor People's Campaign, whatever its other achievements, was a failure.

* I am not here using the precise Marxian definition of lumpenproletariat—i.e., bohemians, petty racketeers, fly-by-night people, the debris of other classes. But I am stressing that the life of the poor, like that of the Marxian lumpenproletariat, is characterized by a lack of cohesion and structure. The proletariat can be poor but it is disciplined by its conditions of work; the lumpenproletariat is both poor and shady, up for grabs.

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Poland: The Party and the Jews

Paul Lendvai

"It is anti-Semitism when somebody comes out against the Jews just because they are Jews."
—Wladyslaw Gomulka

THE MOST NOTABLE feature of the political turbulence in Poland this year has been the purge of "Zionist" elements, who were blamed first for the student demonstrations in March, and subsequently for virtually all the ills plaguing the country. At the start, anti-Semitism may merely have been manipulated as a demagogic weapon in the fierce struggle for power within the Polish Communist party, but the campaign against "Zionism" and "alien elements" soon developed a momentum of its own, investing specific clashes of interest with high emotional content. The results of the anti-Semitic crusade are well known: hundreds of Jews have been dismissed from their posts; scores of Jewish students are in prison; and an officially instigated, if not enforced, exodus is likely to put an early end to the organized Jewish community in Poland.

One cannot understand the origins, intensity, and scope of this anti-Jewish witch-hunt in terms of the stereotyped distinction between "soft" liberals and "hard" Stalinists, or between "native" Communists and "Muscovites." Nor can one explain the unprecedented dimensions of the "anti-Zionist" purge—in a country noted for the liberal treatment of its small Jewish community since the "Polish October" of 1956—by reference to the repercussions of last year's Arab-Israeli war, though these were surely significant. The conflict between the official pro-Arab line and popular sympathy for Israel was as evident in other countries of Eastern Europe as it was in Poland. Only in Poland, however, did the "attitude toward the Israeli aggression" become a major political issue and an excuse for the systematic elimination of Jews from responsible positions in public, academic, and cultural life. The Hungarian regime encountered equally strong public opposition to its rigid anti-Israeli stance, but there the situation had no impact whatsoever on the life of the Jewish community, although Hungary, a country with one-third the population of Poland, has three times as many Jews.

Similarly, although Poland shares with other East European countries a powerful tradition of latent anti-Semitism, nowhere else in recent years have ethnic prejudices been so overtly and so blatantly exploited by a rising group within the party seeking recognition and power. To understand the specific nature of the current political crisis in Poland, therefore, one has to go back to the history of the Polish Communist movement and observe how it has differed from, as well as resembled, the Communist movements of other East European countries.

EVEN BEFORE the turn of the century, the socialist movement in Poland was deeply split over the crucial issue of national independence. While the Polish Socialist party (PPS) proclaimed the attainment of national independence as the primary task, the internationalist left wing of the movement (SDKPiL), led by Rosa Luxemburg, subordinated the national problem to the battle for world revolution and even rejected the principle of national self-determination. Even before the restoration of Poland as a sovereign state at the end of World War I, the overwhelming majority of Poles—including the workers among them—were more likely to be swayed by the romantic notions of a proud patriotism than by the lofty principles of abstract universalism. Thus in 1920, when the Red Army invaded the newly independent Poland, the result was not an uprising of the proletariat but a military disaster for the Soviet Union and the loss of Soviet territory to the east of the so-called "Curzon line."

Subsequent historical events have shown again and again that the spirit of nationalism has remained central to the political life of Poland. Those who have acted as torchbearers of "proletarian internationalism" have inevitably placed themselves outside the mainstream of national history. This, indeed, was the main reason for the self-imposed isolation of the Polish Communists during the period between the two World Wars. An offspring of the former Luxemburg wing of the socialist movement, the Polish Communist party belonged to the Comintern, the discredited instrument of old-fashioned Russian imperialism. Since it represented a line diametrically opposed

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to the country's national interest, it was almost universally regarded as being intrinsically "anti-Polish." At the same time, it was resented for being "un-Polish" because an excessively high percentage of its key personnel and activists was German, or Ukranian—or Jewish.

LIVING AS THEY DID under a regime that was both authoritarian and anti-Semitic, many Jewish intellectuals and workers found solace and hope in the twin promise of assimilation and socialism held out by the Polish Communist party (KPP).* In the early 30's the Jews constituted only 10 per cent of the total population of Poland, but they accounted for about 25 per cent of the party's membership. In 1938, the Comintern dissolved the KKP as an "espionage agency" and Stalin ordered almost all of its leaders shot, but even thereafter those Jews who survived both the purges and the subsequent Nazi invasion continued to be disproportionately represented in the Communist elite in exile. Thus among the "Muscovites," according to a leading Polish sociologist who spent the war in the Soviet Union, Jews at one point accounted for 60 to 70 per cent of the top and medium-level functionaries.

It was, of course, not only in Poland but all over Eastern Europe that Jews subscribed to the deeply-rooted myth that the overthrow of capitalism and the emergence of a socialist system would put an automatic end to all forms of ethnic discrimination. Similarly, all over Europe Jews predominated among the people who returned to their countries in the baggage trains of the Red Army. Far from attenuating traditional ethnic prejudices, the imposition of Communism and Soviet domination by the Rakosis, Slanskys, Paukers, and Bermans has everywhere reinforced pre-war anti-Semitism; the relatively few Jews occupying top positions were detested as Soviet agents, as representatives of an alien power.

In this connection, it is important to remember that the "home-grown" Communists, the veterans of the various Communist undergrounds, always harbored a sense of resentment against the "Muscovites," whom they regarded as little more than the stooges of Stalin. Thus a latent but powerful "conventional" anti-Semitism was joined to a deep sense of frustration, tinged with a new kind of anti-Semitism, among leading "home" Communists and later among the younger functionaries who came to the fore in the 50's. Moreover, Stalin's anti-Zionist witch-hunt and the Soviet Union's anti-Israel foreign policy animated anti-Semitism from below. They accelerated the process known as the "nationalization of the elite," which involved more often than not the replacement of "foreign elements" by non-Jewish personnel.

All these factors have been at work in *every* East European country under Communist rule, and in all these countries Jews in public life have been precariously poised on the brink of an abyss. Between 1948 and 1953 they were always the possible victims of Stalin's paranoid anti-Semitism; after Stalin's death and in the ensuing loosening of the reins they were in danger of becoming the prime targets of the popular discontent which had long been simmering and now threatened to erupt. Nevertheless, one need only think of the Hungarian Revolution (with Jews on both sides of the barricades) and its aftermath, and of recent developments in Rumania, to realize the pitfalls of sweeping generalizations about Communist regimes and their behavior both toward their own Jewish communities and toward the state of Israel.

Thus, in spite of the many similarities to be found among all East European Communist regimes—the tradition of ethnic prejudice, the role played by Communists of Jewish origin, the conflict between "home-grown" Communists and "Moscow-men"—it was only in Poland that at two crucial junctures (in 1956 and again in 1967-68) anti-Semitism openly appeared as a central political issue and as the main demagogic device for winning factional battles. The roots of this striking difference between Poland and the other Communist countries, as well as the roots of the present conflict within the party, can to some extent be found in the conditions under which the Communists seized power in Poland.

IN CONTRAST TO the situation prevailing in other East European Communist parties, the division between those Polish Communists who fought on home territory and those who spent most of World War II in the Soviet Union was institutionalized as early as 1942. In that year, Wladyslaw Gomulka and other Communists who remained in occupied Poland founded the Polish Workers' party, now officially described as "a national party par excellence." By this time, most of the Jewish party members had either perished or else had managed to escape to the Soviet Union. There they were prominent among the one thousand five hundred Communists who set up the Union of Polish Patriots in 1943. There were, of course, many non-Jewish leaders among the Muscovites as well, including Boleslaw Bierut, who from 1944 to 1956 was the supreme leader of Polish Communism, and any discussion of whose real role is carefully avoided by Polish Communist historiography.

The brief period from 1945 to 1948 was marked

* There were, of course, other options open to them, but this is not the place to go into the tangled problems of the Bund and other specifically Jewish political organizations in Poland.

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by an uneasy coexistence between the home Communists and the Muscovites. Gomulka was elected as Secretary General of the party, but it was the triumvirate of Bierut, Jakub Berman (in charge of the secret police and propaganda), and Hilary Minc (the economic overlord) which made the crucial policy decisions and controlled the dominant posts. Both Berman and Minc were Jewish as, indeed, were many other men occupying positions of power and influence.

In 1948, the satellite countries began to undergo a transition from tolerated diversity to enforced uniformity. In the wake of his conflict with Tito, Stalin unleashed purges against most of the native Communist leaders who had fought in the undergrounds of their countries. In Poland this meant that Gomulka and other prominent former Partisans were publicly disgraced and arrested on charges of "rightist nationalistic deviation."

Even during the heyday of Stalinism, however, the Polish Communist party was never a monolith but rather a web of interest groups. The multiple and often contradictory cross-currents within the party surfaced during the prolonged crisis of 1956, which came about as a result of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign, the almost simultaneous death of Bierut, the subsequent fight for succession, and the Poznan riots.

There has long been a legend that Gomulka's return to power in October 1956 marked the triumph of a liberal leader at the head of the "revisionists" against the bitter opposition of pro-Soviet "Stalinists." However, the situation during the troubled summer and autumn of 1956 was much more complex than these deceptively simple labels would indicate. The men who had held the stage for over a decade prior to 1956 belonged to the so-called Pulawy group, named after the residential suburb in Warsaw where most of the Muscovites had lived. The Politburo nominated Roman Zambrowski, one of the influential members of this group, as Bierut's successor at the helm of the party. Khrushchev, however, vetoed Zambrowski because the latter was a Jew and had been too closely connected with the events of the Stalin era. Khrushchev's own choice was the head of the so-called Natolin group. (Natolin is a villa near Warsaw where this faction held its meetings.) Finally, a compromise was reached with the election of Edward Ochab, a non-Jew, a Muscovite, a representative of the internationalistic wing of the party, and supposedly a reliable Stalinist.

Faced with growing pressure from dissatisfied workers and progressive intellectuals, the two main groups advocated different approaches. The Pulawy men—out of disillusionment, opportunism, and fear for the fate of the regime—pleaded for bold reforms and at first dissociated themselves from Gomulka's alleged nationalism. The Natolin men, many of whom were also Muscovites, were mainly of peasant stock and proletarian origin. They were openly pro-Soviet and wanted to restore order and discipline by a strong-arm policy, yet they had been the first to come out in favor of Gomulka's return to power. One cannot neatly divide the two factions according to their ideological positions, nor is it possible here to go into a detailed summary of the issues that divided them—and frequently caused internal dissensions among the two groups as well. It must suffice to say that the most hotly debated topics were the character of Soviet-Polish relations, the reinterpretation of the past, and Gomulka's future role.

During the Stalin era, both the hard-liners and those who later became converts to liberalism held power; what had always divided them was the issue of anti-Semitism. Now, in 1956, the Natolin faction seized on the fact that both the main culprits in the excesses of the past (Berman and Minc) and the leading moderates among the leadership were Jews; it launched an open campaign to channel hatred for Communism (and the Russians) into hatred for Jews. Thus at the meeting of the Central Committee in July 1956, Zenon Nowak, deputy Premier and Politburo member, proposed a "national regulation" limiting the number of Jews in responsible posts. After rattling off statistics about the proportion of Jews in prominent positions, Nowak assured his listeners that he, of course, was not an anti-Semite at all; it was only that "the party's personnel policy has often stimulated anti-Semitism." From that time on, however, the Natolin faction used barely veiled anti-Semitic and anti-intellectual slogans—at public rallies as well as in closed meetings—to divert popular discontent and to weaken its leading rival, the Pulawy group.

THUS ANTI-SEMITISM was a major issue in 1956 even before the October upheaval, as was later confirmed by none other than Gomulka himself. Speaking about the divisions among the former leadership and about appointments to leading posts, he remarked: "Some comrades approached this problem in a very simplified way, which could be taken for anti-Semitism." Moreover, the resolution adopted at the historic October Plenum in 1956 which elected Gomulka as First Secretary stressed: "The party condemns . . . manifestations of discrimination against any group of the population because of their origin which tend to foster anti-Semitism and other nationalistic trends that are alien to the party ideology and demoralize the party cadres."

Neither the issue of anti-Semitism nor the issue of Polish nationalism was really resolved in October 1956, but both were temporarily pushed be-

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low the surface. At any rate, it ws not anti-Semitism but the upsurge of anti-Russian feelings that tipped the balance in favor of the liberals and the authentic revisionists. Since the Natolin group had by October become a discredited tool of the Krelim, Gomulka, who had been approached by both of the rival factions, finally allied himself with the Pulawy group. One might add that neither Gomulka nor the Pulawy group was anti-Soviet; what they both wanted was internal autonomy in the context of a close, but more equal, alliance with the Soviet Union, which was, after all, the chief protector of Poland's Oder-Neisse frontier.

Notwithstanding the carefully fostered myth, Gomulka was the symbol rather than the creator of the "Polish October," and the "Polish October" was a negation, rather than the product, of the spirit of 1956. Relying on his poularity as a victim of Stalinism and as the "man who stood up to Moscow," as well as on his control of the army and the secret police, Gomulka soon began to direct blows at his former allies, to play off one group against the other, and thus to consolidate his hold on the party apparat. Gomulka, sixty-three years old in 1956, was a professional party apparatchik of proletarian origin. He was never a liberal, but rather a self-tutored professional who was deeply devoted to the party's monopoly of power, mistrustful of intellectuals, and suspicious of any reforms which might weaken the Communist grip on Poland. Understandably enough, Gomulka never felt any loyalty, let alone friendship, for the Pulawy group, his temporary allies in October. After all, these were the very men who had attacked and toppled him in the 40's with the same singleminded dedication and enthusiasm with which they praised and welcomed him in 1956.

As early as 1957-58, Gomulka firmly rejected institutional reforms like the program for radical economic decentralization, divested the workers' councils of all real power, and clamped down on revisionist intellectuals and students. In 1958, the most prominent reformers in the leadership (Morawski, Bienkowski, Albrecht, etc.) were removed and replaced by hard-liners, including former spokesmen of the Natolin group; at the same time, Gomulka's associates from underground days took over the key posts in the army, the police, and the state security service. This marked the beginning of the slow but steady ascendancy of the Partisans, the former underground fighters who, after many years in the political wilderness or behind bars, were eager to make a political comeback. The Partisans shared with the former Natolin group a belief in discipline, a profound distrust of intellectuals, and, last but not least, anti-Semitic prejudices. However, in contrast to the extreme pro-Soviet stance of the Natolin men, the Partisans had always been intensely nationalistic and therefore anti-Soviet.

Even this crudely simplified survey of the intricate connections among the diverse groups struggling for power in Poland should indicate how dangerously misleading is the conventional distinction between "Stalinists" and the "men of October." In truth, today's "liberals" are former Stalinists no less than their opponents are, while the "Partisans" are both hard-liners and the former victims of Stalinism.

OVER THE YEARS of his rule Gomulka presented himself as the chief advocate of the interests of the "party of order"—the upper-middle and medium strata of the party and state bureaucracies and the administrative and managerial class. Initially he presided over a weird coalition of his erstwhile adversaries from the Pulawy and Natolin groups, though a middle-of-the-road center composed of his personal followers held the balance of power between the two factions. Gradually, his rule became more autocratic and there emerged the "Gomulka establishment," as, with seemingly consummate skill and timing, Gomulka eliminated his real and potential opponents, most of whom were moderates and ex-Stalinists-turned-liberals. Since many of these men—as well as some of the ablest and most articulate spokesmen of the genuinely reformist intelligentsia—happened also to be Jews, Gomulka's fight against the remnants of the "Polish October" was in a sense a fight against the Jews. The net result was the almost total elimination of the Pulawy group, whose leader, Zambrowski (a Jew), lost his seat in the Politburo as early as 1963.

However, neither Gomulka's autocratic rule nor his tortuous search for some kind of consensus could halt or even camouflage a growing crisis in party morale and public confidence. The sources of this discontent are varied but are all connected with the basic immobilism of the Gomulka regime. The Polish government could muster up no more than a few dispirited half-measures in response to such grave problems as a latent economic crisis, social anarchy, recurring tension with the Catholic Church, the frustration of the intelligentsia, and alienation of the youth. In the midst of the new ferment which gripped the Communist world from Belgrade to Bucharest, Gomulka's Poland became a backwater of stagnation and retreat.

During 1964 and 1965 the mounting bitterness of the intellectuals and the students against petty censorship and the betrayal of the ideals of the "Polish October" erupted in a series of much-publicized conflicts with the government. It is, however, as unwise as it is easy to exaggerate the political significance of writers' manifestoes and

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the activities of fringe groups of revisionist professors and progressive Catholic thinkers. The temporary links between intellectuals and workers, forged in 1956, long ago disappeared; the Polish workers are far more interested in concrete benfits than in ideological conflicts. Moreover, genuine reformers have been evicted from the political arena, so that the opposition has been barred from exerting any appreciable influence on the top ranks of the party. The experiences of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 have provided ample evidence that the presence of genuine reformers in the center of power, and the exercise of their initiative from above, are the absolute pre-conditions for any real change in Communist countries—whether that change be peaceful or violent.

An incomparably more dangerous threat to the Gomulka establishment and its policy of tenuous compromises comes from what the Poles call the "Right." These are the forces of the reactionary, dogmatist hard-liners: the "Partisans," a faction of disaffected party apparatchiks, and a motley collection of allies ranging from police agents to former Fascists. In the eyes of the Polish "Right," Gomulka and his closest associates have failed to produce a revolutionary élan, failed to instill the disgruntled party apparatus with a sense of purpose, and failed to make a clean sweep of Jews and liberals. The evident weaknesses of the men who have ruled Poland on and off since 1945 are compounded by the fact that they are no longer young—in a country two-thirds of whose population is under forty, the average age of Politburo members is almost sixty.

The basic goal of the rising factions from the "Right" which have stepped into the political arena in the 60's is to replace a decaying and enfeebled authoritarian dynasty, based on the personal dictatorship of Gomulka, with a new, vigorous, and ruthlessly determined authoritarian regime. These groups are united by a common craving for power, but they differ on many points of policy and they represent distinct interests. The most important and dynamic new factional group is the "Partisans," among whom, ironically, Gomulka and his best friends might themselves qualify as members, having also fought in in the small Communist underground during World War II. Today, however, the label is applied primarily to those second-tier functionaries and wartime subordinates of Gomulka who formed a tightly-knit faction around General Mieczyslaw Moczar in the early 60's. A man of extraordinary drive and ambition, the fifty-four-year-old Moczar has been called the "Polish Fouché," because of his tactical brilliance and consummate skill in building up a power base.

A former partisan commander, Moczar is a highly competent professional secret-police official. After a promising postwar start as security chief in Lodz and member of the Central Committee, he, like Gomulka, was engulfed by the 1948 purge of "nationalists." (The fact that his chief accuser was Zambrowski injected an element of personal revenge into his notoriously anti-Semitic feelings.) After a long spell of relative obscurity, Moczar was, in 1956, appointed by Gomulka as Deputy Minister of the Interior and put in charge of the secret police. By supervising Gomulka's briefing on security matters, Moczar managed to gain a growing influence over the aging leader's general views and, more important, over his personnel policies.

THUS, DURING his twelve years of tenure at the Ministry of the Interior, Moczar has not only built up an almost unassailable position of power for himself, but has also managed to place trusted associates into key positions in the army, the foreign service, and the mass media. To be sure, his bid for Politburo membership was thwarted at the last party congress in 1964, but in the same year Moczar was appointed as Minister of Interior and also secured the chairmanship of ZBOWiD, the veterans' organization. Under his leadership, this association of eight hundred thousand members became not only a formidable pressure group but also a symbol of national unity, including as it does not only Communist partisans, but also non-Communist resistance fighters as well as members of the formerly vilified Home Army (AK). Moczar's chief ally in the party has been Ryzard Strzelecki, a colorless but shrewd organization man, secretary of the Central Committee since 1961, and a Politburo member since 1964. Strzelecki has managed to place trusted hard-liners (including quite a few former Natolinites) in key positions as secretaries of the regional party organizations.

Though Moczar and his followers have not yet come forward with a coherent ideological platform, their basic attitude is clearly a mixture of intense nationalism and primitive anti-Semitism, and their rhetoric bears a strong resemblance to the pre-war social-fascist movement. Nor does the resemblance stop with rhetoric, as can be seen from the fact that the most vociferous ally of the Partisans is the sinister Boleslaw Piasecki, the leader of the pre-war Fascist youth movement who became an agent of the NKVD as soon as the Red Army entered Poland. Later Piasecki not only created PAX, a strong pseudo-Catholic organization designed to split the Catholic Church, but also amassed a commercial empire for himself. A passionate enemy of Gomulka in 1956, Piasecki survived only because Gomulka needed PAX as a bargaining lever against the Church. In recent years, this former-Fascist-turned-Stalinist-stooge has put the daily and weekly newspapers of his

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movement at Moczar's disposal. Together, the two men have also subsidized and brought under their control other papers, such as *Kultura*, a weekly, and *Prawo i Zycie*, the bi-weekly of the Lawyers' Association.

Between 1964 and 1967 the Partisans and their allies steadily increased their influence by moving into the political vacuum created by the erosion of Gomulka's authority and the elimination of genuine reformers from the top ranks of the party. To pave the way to ultimate power, however, the Partisans needed the support of the "Technocrats," a vital interest group in Poland. The managerial class and the technocratic minded functionaries do not, of course, constitute a tightly-knit faction, but they do have a generally recognized leading representative in Edward Gierek, the fifty-five-year-old party secretary of Upper Silesia. A former coal miner who grew up and worked in France and Belgium, Gierek returned to Poland only in 1948, and is not, therefore, identified either with the Partisans or with the Muscovite Stalinists. He is the only member of the Politburo who has managed to project a public image of progressive dynamism combined with administrative ability. In contrast to Moczar's emotionally-tinged ideological approach, Gierek's public statements and activities appear to offer a program of economic efficiency coupled with strong political controls. With an eye on the forthcoming party congress later this year, and aware that to a certain extent he holds the balance of power between Gomulka's Old Guard and the Moczar-Strzelecki faction, Gierek has so far chosen to remain uncommitted, and has responded ambivalently to the feelers put out to him by the Partisans.

THIS, THEN, was the broad alignment of forces when the Arab-Israeli war opened the decisive phase of the struggle for power in Poland. Paradoxically, it was Gomulka himself who first publicly raised the Zionist bogey and inadvertently plunged his regime into a state of crisis. In a politically disastrous speech to the Trade Union Congress on June 19, 1967, Gomulka referred to a Jewish "fifth column" and to the alleged "drinking parties" celebrating the Israeli victory. These remarks were, to be sure, deleted from the official printed version of the speech, but they were transmitted by radio and television and they unleashed the offensive of those forces who had only been awaiting a suitable occasion for initiating a general purge of all Jews and moderates.

Why did Gomulka, who had never been tainted with ethnic prejudices—and whose own wife was Jewish—go beyond the general Communist line against "Israeli aggression"? To some extent, his exaggerated response may have been influenced by Moczar's reports about Jews rejoicing over the Arab defeat. Primarily, however, Gomulka's fury was due to the evident upsurge of *Polish* popular support for Israel, an upsurge prompted by glee over a major Soviet setback rather than a sudden burst of philo-Semitism among the Poles. The much-quoted saying—"*Our* Jews have beaten *their* Arabs"—reflected a phenomenon already in evidence during the "Polish October" of 1956: anti-Russian feelings are a much stronger force in Poland than traditional anti-Semitism. (A Polish intellectual remarked to me: "The population has become wary of anti-Semitism because it is officially sponsored by the party.")

Aspiring to be a leader of world Communism second only to the men in the Kremlin, and fanatically committed to the fiction of Communist "unity," Gomulka was genuinely frightened by the swelling tide of anti-Soviet *Schadenfreude* which extended even to the ranks of the Polish officer corps. By his speech and by the subsequent propaganda campaign, Gomulka intended to use his country's latent anti-Semitism to counteract the general sympathy for Israel. Indeed, he went so far as to try to turn upside down the parallel which had been drawn between Israel in 1967 and Poland in 1938: Gomulka identified Israel with Nazi Germany and the Arab side with Poland.

Gomulka's speech made anti-Semitism, thinly disguised as anti-Zionism, legitimate in Poland for the first time since 1956. Once more every Polish Jew, in or out of the party, could henceforth be accused of being a Zionist. The target of the campaign, the Jewish community, numbered a mere twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand people, less than one per cent of the total population. Out of some fifteen thousand Jewish adults, about five thousand to seven thousand may have been party members (out of a total membership of two million). Whatever their concern or sympathy for Israel in the moment of its crisis, these adult Jews had deliberately chosen to remain in Poland after 1956, rather than to emigrate to Israel as tens of thousands of Polish Jews had done. Even more absurd is the charge of Zionism against those Jews in responsible positions, who by and large have an "impeccable" record with regard to Israel and remained prudently silent during and after the Six-Day War. But then what the Jews were reallly blamed for all along was not their Zionism but their liberalism (or revisionism).

Once set in motion, the "anti-Zionist" campaign soon went farther and faster than Gomulka himself had bargained for. The "attitude toward the party's appraisal of the Israeli aggression" was made a test of party loyalty and patriotism. As a prelude to a large-scale campaign to "verify loyalty" three generals and over one-hundred of-

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ficers were dismissed either because of their candid remarks about the military aspects of the Arab debacle, or simply because of their Jewish origin. By the autumn of 1967, a quiet but systematic purge of Jewish officials was in full swing; in October General Moczar and his allies emerged as the real manipulators of the whole vitriolic campaign. Thus in a radio broadcast, Moczar proclaimed that there was no difference between Israeli bahavior toward the Arabs and the way the Nazis had treated Poles and Polish Jews. Kazimirez Rusinek, Moczar's deputy at the veterans' union and vice-minister for Culture and Art, went even further; in the course of a radio interview, he flatly stated: "It is no secret that many Hitlerite criminals are in the service of the Israeli Government. They live on the territory of the State of Israel. I estimate that there are over one thousand experts of the former Hitlerite Wehrmacht who have become advisers to the Israeli army." His charges were characteristic of the absurd lengths to which the mass media, controlled by the Partisans, have gone in "proving" what they call a "Zionist-German revanchist collusion directed against People's Poland." Such "proof" is also the main burden of several books which have already appeared or are scheduled for publication in the near future.

Late in 1967, while Gomulka was forced to devote most of his time to growing popular discontent against the steep rise in the price of meat, the Partisans scored further important successes. They forced the dismissal of several prominent Jews and moderates, among whom were the Mayor of Warsaw as well as the editors of *Trybuna Ludu*, the party paper; and they staged a series of political trials, one of which resulted in a three-year prison sentence for Nina Karsow, a crippled survivor of Treblinka whose crime was the keeping of a diary not even intended for publication. Moczar was deliberately intensifying the political tensions besetting Poland. The reformist revolt in Prague contributed to these tensions by infusing Poland's students and writers with new hopes. These groups now launched a protest movement against the government's ban on the performances of *Dziady* (Forefathers' Eve), Adam Mickiwicz's great national drama which calls for a fight against Czarist oppression. Moczar skillfully and assiduously fanned these flames in order to frighten the besieged and embattled Gomulka, and in order to make the situation appear desperate enough to justify a resort to measures of desperation.

In line with this strategy, Moczar and his allies used a peaceful meeting of several thousand students in the courtyard of Warsaw University on March 8 of this year to set the stage for the final showdown. The meeting had been called for the purpose of demanding the reinstatement of Adam Michnik and Henryk Szlajfer, two Jewish students who had been expelled from the university for taking part in earlier protests. After chanting such slogans as "There can be no bread without freedom, there can be no studies without freedom!" the students were ready to disperse. However, before they could leave the university precincts they were attacked by several busloads of party "activists," and later by truncheon-swinging militia units. The brutality of the militia turned a calm demonstration into three days of student riots, which soon spread to the provinces as well. There followed the (temporary) arrest of several thousand students, the shut-down of eight departments in Warsaw University, and the military conscription of the leaders of the protest. By such means, the regime eventually restored a semblance of order, but as late as May 1 there were still sporadic demonstrations in Wroclaw.

There is ample evidence that the "showdown" proceeded in accordance with a carefully prepared plan. In private conversations with this author, a number of professors, students, and other eyewitnesses unanimously agreed that the events of March 8 were the result of a deliberate provocation. Lending evidence to their assessment is the fact that within three days of the initial events, *Trybuna Ludu* had published a list of the purported "ringleaders"—eight Jewish names culled from a roster of two thousand arrested students—and expressed "surprise" that they were the children of responsible state and party officials. The list had obviously been prepared well in advance, for it included the daughter of the former Mayor of Warsaw who had in fact been studying in Paris for the past six months.

On the same day this list was published, Jozef Kepa, the Warsaw party secretary, publicly launched a purge against the Jews. Declaring that the troublemakers were primarily of Jewish origin, and partly associated with the "Babel Club" of the Jewish Cultural Association, he went on to announce that "we will not allow ourselves to be blackmailed by the bogey of anti-Semitism" and that the students' parents were responsible "regardless of their position." Moreover, he linked the "ringleaders" with "bankrupt politicians" such as Zambrowski and former Warsaw party chief Staszewski, both of whom, of course, were Jews, and both of whom had been living in public disgrace for more than four years. This reference to two former Pulawy-men was the first sign that the student troubles would be used as a pretext for a major power struggle first against the Jews, and then against all those who protected "Zionists, bankrupt politicians, revisionists, and Stalinists."

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On the following day the "anti-Zionist" campaign erupted at full strength. Two ostensibly non-Communist papers controlled by the Partisans, *Slowo Powszechne* (Piasecki's mouthpiece) and *Kurier Polski* (of the "Democratic Party") sounded the alarm: "Zionists in Poland want to turn the intellectuals and the youth against their primary responsibility to People's Poland." Both singled out the names of Jewish scholars and writers as being responsible for the student unrest. The PAX paper subsequently claimed that "Zionist circles in Israel and West German revanchists have combined to inspire Polish Zionist circles to sow trouble in Poland."

What made the so-called "March events" so profoundly shocking to many Poles—Jews and non-Jews alike—was the frightening and unexpected strength displayed by Moczar's Partisans and Strzelecki's hard-liners. As a prominent intellectual put it: "Overnight and everywhere, small groups of people who had hitherto remained in the background suddenly took off their masks, demanded a purge of Zionists, and intimidated all of us." The intimidation proceeded by means of carefully staged mass rallies which resulted in a flood of letters and telegrams to Gomulka. Typical of these "spontaneous" resolutions was the one issued by the ZBOWiD branch organization in Warsaw; it demanded " a complete purge of Zionist elements and other enemies of socialist reality from the political, state administrative, educational, and cultural apparatus and also from social organizations."

In the midst of the general "anti-Zionist" campaign, certain institutions, and by implication the party leaders in charge of them, appeared as specific targets of attack: the Academy of Science, the Institute of Nuclear Research, the Committee for Science and Technology, the faculties of the departments of sociology and philosophy at Warsaw University, scientific publishing houses, the film industry, parts of the mass media, and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Finance, and Culture. In general, the attacks centered on those sectors of Polish life which had hitherto resisted control by the Partisans, which had employed a sprinkling of high-ranking Jewish officials or specialists, and which were led by the political and personal enemies of the Moczar-Strzelecki faction.

As was to be expected, the witch-hunt was most effective and direct in government institutions. Thus in the Foreign Ministry the Partisan activists simply dismissed Marian Naskowski, the first deputy Minister (a Jew and a party veteran) and forbade him to enter his office; in London the party cell summarily expelled Ambassador Morawski, a former member of the Politburo. Within less than two months of the events of March 8, the purge was to claim no fewer than eighty government officials, including fourteen of ministerial or vice-ministerial rank. But the witch-hunt, of course, went far beyond government circles; it extended to several noted film producers, scores of distinguished scholars, and hundreds of named and unnamed other victims—almost all of them Jews. As Professor Zolkiewski courageously stated at the plenary meeting of the Central Committee in July, the dismissals have thrown back "Polish science and arts by twenty years."

WHAT WERE THE effects of this revolt "from below" on the alignments at the top? The fact that Gierek publicly endorsed the purge as early as March 14, in a sharply-worded speech addressed to one hundred thousand people in Katowice, was an indication that major shifts in the balance of power were, or might be, taking place. The public build-up of Gierek as an alternative to Gomulka (and as front-man for Moczar) was evident during Gomulka's speech of March 19 to three thousand party activists, a number of whom were chanting "Gierek-Wieslaw" (Gomulka's underground pseudonym).

Gomulka's speech on that day undoubtedly marked a turning point in the crisis; at the very least it exposed both the weakness and ambivalence of Gomulka's own position. Sharply castigating the students and the intellectuals, he did not dissociate himself from the purge, but he did try to shift the blame for the "March events" from "Zionists" and "bankrupt politicians" to anti-Soviet "reactionaries and revisionists," and he went so far as to say that "it would be a misunderstanding to see in Zionism a danger to socialism in Poland, to her social and political system."

Thereupon, Gomulka proceeded to enrich the Communist theory of the Jewish question by dividing Polish Jews into three categories. The first consisted of those Jews who considered Israel their homeland and who were, in fact, free to go there. The second category consisted of those who felt themselves to be neither Poles nor Jews. According to Gomulka, such people should not be blamed, but because of their cosmopolitan feelings they should avoid fields of work necessitating national affirmation. Lastly, the Polish leader paid warm tribute to "the most numerous group of Polish citizens of Jewish origin" for whom Poland was the only fatherland and who had rendered great services to the country and to socialism. In conclusion, Gomulka distinguished unequivocally between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism: "It is anti-Semitism when somebody comes out against the Jews just because they are Jews."

Unfortunately, the response to this speech pro-

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vided stunning proof of the hatred many Poles feel for "Jews just because they are Jews." When Gomulka first uttered the word "Jew," wild shouts from one corner of the hall drowned him out, and he was repeatedly prevented from talking by near-hysterical outbursts that were reminiscent of Nazi rallies. To be sure, only a few hundred members of the crowd participated in these disturbances, but those who watched the proceedings on television were given a different impression. Skillful editing and camera work by Moczar's agents made it seem that the whole audience of three thousand activists was pressing a hesitant Gomulka to act more energetically against the "Zionist enemy."

The very ambiguity of Gomulka's formulations opened the door to a campaign that erased all differences between "good" and "bad" Jews. His appeal for calm and moderation failed dismally; in fact, the purge gained a real momentum only after Gomulka's speech of March 19. That things proceeded to get worse can be seen from a dispatch of April 6 by a Yugoslav correspondent for a Zagreb paper who described the political climate on the basis of his talks with Warsaw party officials: "The greatest problem for the party was Zionism, the members of the city committee stated. Precisely this and nothing else. They described Zionism as a mixture of American imperialism, Israeli imperialism, and West German revanchism. It seems that for some people in Poland Zionism has become a real obsession. No political official with whom I talked accepted the remark that it is unimportant and that it might perhaps be superfluous to add to the names of incriminated persons the attribute: a Pole of Jewish origin."

It is impossible to recount all the lurid details of the "anti-Zionist" campaign, which finally sank to the level of defaming even the memory of the three million Polish Jews who died at the hands of the Germans. Suffice it to say that innumerable articles and television programs attacked "alien elements," featured a handful of Polish wives of Jews who had returned from Israel after having been "tyrannized" by rabbis, focused on the alleged collaboration of influential Polish Jews with the Nazi occupiers, emphasized the indifference of Western Jews "more concerned about their billions in bank investments than with the fate of the millions of Jews being burned in the crematoria," and stressed the magnificent assistance rendered to the Jews during the Occupation by the Poles—in particular by the Partisans.

As can be seen from such virulence, the "anti-Zionist" campaign was not merely directed against prominent Communists. It was a general and indiscriminate witch-hunt against factory managers and engineers, famed surgeons and humble merchants, dental technicians and low-ranking administrators—people whose only common denominator was their Jewishness. Moreover, the punishment of the victims went far beyond what might conceivably be justified on political grounds. Thus a number of prominent physicians in Lodz—including Professor Jerzy Szapiro, the country's leading brain surgeon, and Professor Mieczyslaw Fuchs, the head of the stomatological clinic—were not merely expelled from the party for their "passivity"; the party went on to ask the Ministry of Health to dismiss these men from their jobs. Thus, too, the six professors summarily dismissed from Warsaw University on March 25 received no pension and are today dependent on the support of colleagues and students.

Those Jews whom Gomulka had praised for having "sunk their roots deep into the soil on which they were born" were frequently subjected to particularly vicious attacks precisely because they had tried to assimilate. For example, the report of the expulsion of a press circulation manager in Lodz referred to the aggravating circumstance that it "was not possible to establish from his thick personal file under what conditions he changed his name from Cwajgeschaft to Zychlinski."

Nor did it help the Jews in Gomulka's "third category" to protest their fate. At a party meeting, Szymon Jakubowicz, a prominent journalist on the staff of a large Warsaw paper, rejected the charge of Zionism as an outrageous lie and insisted that he was a Pole "with all his roots." The following evening a gang of Piasecki's (or Moczar's?) thugs beat him up as he was on his way home. (A few days earlier, they had attacked Stefan Kisielewski, the valiant Catholic author; both men were hospitalized.) And as late as May 20, when the "anti-Zionist" campaign showed distinct signs of ebbing, Warsaw Radio, in reporting the trial of a state official accused of fraud, not only referred to his Jewish origin, but also announced that the state prosecutor had demanded the annulment of the defendent's officially approved change of name from Icek Abram Kierbel to Marian Kargul.

ONE NEED NOT minimize the horror and significance of these anti-Semitic excesses in order to realize that they were merely the secondary symptoms of a conflict in which the primary issue was, and continues to be, the balance of power in the Polish leadership. From the very beginning, the house organs of the Partisans have not only railed against Jews, but have repeatedly emphasized the responsibility of the top leadership for "permanently existing semi-socialism and mutilated programs" in Poland. Up to now, Gomulka and his associates—including

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Premier Cyrankiewicz and Zenon Kliszko, the chief ideologist of the party—have successfully parried the challenge to their power. They have managed to gain valuable time by postponing the convening of the Central Committee, and they have pre-empted some of the dynamism of the Partisan offensive—by virtually adopting the program of the Partisans. The Gomulka center has even mounted a counter-offensive by proclaiming that revisionism, reaction, and nationalism are the main dangers to Poland, and by warning against "social demagogy" and a "simplified use of the concept of Zionism."

Denied the opportunity of an immediate confrontation with Gomulka at a Central Committee plenum, Moczar began to lose momentum in his bid for supreme power. It is possible that Moczar may have overestimated his own strength, dazzled as he was by his control of the mass media and by his initial successes. At any rate, from mid-April on, the fence-sitters, the waverers, and the tactical allies of Moczar—including Gierek and Kepa, the Warsaw party secretary who had launched the "anti-Zionist" campaign—began to dissociate themselves from "extremism" and to shift back to the "Gomulkaites," still the "party of order." Faced with a crisis, Communist politicians tend to act like all other politicians: they improvise; they are likely to shift their allegiances from day to day; and they are frequently swept along by the stream of circumstances.

Gomulka has thus won the first round in the struggle for power. His victory was by no means due solely to his considerable personal authority, which has been weakened. He has staved off the challenge to his rule in part because he had the backing of the Polish army, in part because the Kremlin supported him, and perhaps above all because so many influential politicians in Poland share a profound distrust of Moczar and Strzelecki. In other words, Gomulka has benefited from the unbridled excesses of the "purification" campaign. Nevertheless, events have shown that Gomulka was not powerful enough to halt the purge singlehandedly, let alone "to protect the innocents," nor even to blunt Moczar's bid for power. His autocratic system of rule has suffered an irreparable blow.

Gomulka's loss of power is not the only tangible benefit reaped by the Partisans in the Polish crisis. They have been successful in purging Jewish Communists from the party and in mobilizing ethnic prejudice as a potent political weapon. What is more, the upheavals effectively removed two of their leading enemies from the Politburo. Edward Ochab has resigned in disgust both as head of state and as member of the ruling body, and Foreign Minister Rapacki has since March boycotted both his ministry and all sessions of the Politburo. No fewer than seven Central Committee members and several Ministers—some of them Jews, all of them opponents of the Partisans—have been dismissed. However, at the Central Committee plenum held at long last in July of this year, Moczar failed in his bid to become a full member of the Politburo. Nevertheless, he managed to take a step forward in the corridors of power: he was elected as an alternate member and as Secretary of the Central Committee, though he had formally to give up the portfolio of the Ministry of Interior. At this moment, then, Gomulka is *no longer* strong enough to check the ascendancy of the Partisans, while the Partisans are *not yet* powerful enough to gain full control. The party congress scheduled for November will probably provide clearer evidence of the state of the conflict, though the factional struggle—barring unexpected new upheavals—is likely to continue even beyond that date.

THE MAIN issue that divides the Partisans from Gomulka is that of nationalism, and it will remain the main issue regardless of who finally wins the personal struggle for power. Notwithstanding his strong advocacy of polycentrism, Gomulka regards the closest possible political and ideological alliance with Moscow as an absolute imperative for the retention of Poland's Oder-Neisse frontier in the west. In pursuing this policy, Gomulka has at the same time transformed Poland from an abject satellite into a genuine ally of the Soviet Union. He has secured various agreements concerning the status of the Soviet troops stationed in Poland; he has brought about the elimination of trade discrimination; and he has gained respect for Poland's internal autonomy. In short, the former rebel against Soviet power has become the trusted friend of the Kremlin.

By contrast, the Partisans stand for the aggressive reassertion of an exalted Polish patriotism. This can be seen from a widely reported interview Moczar gave in April of this year. By castigating the "politicians dressed in officers' uniforms" who arrived together with the "heroic soldiers" from the Soviet Union in 1944, Moczar was not only hitting at "the Zambrowskis, the Bermans"—that is to say, the Jews—he was also, and for the first time, mounting an explicit and open attack against all Muscovites and their Soviet masters. Moczar's repeated calls for "pride, national dignity and patriotism," and for "a patriotic education of youth" constitute a nationalist manifesto with anti-Soviet undertones. Jendrichowski, a Politburo member, was surely correct when he stated at the last plenum that "Nationalism in Poland may initially have this or that feature but in the end it will always show its anti-Soviet claws." Those claws must appear if only because of explosive problems involved in past Polish-Soviet relations, problems which formerly

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were prudently declared "out of bounds" by Gomulka. Even now, however, a debate is in full swing about various aspects of the past, such as the character of the pre-war Communist party which was liquidated by Stalin. And sooner or later the new wave of nationalistic sentiment is bound to bring about a real confrontation with issues which have hitherto been regarded as taboo: the carving up of Poland by Hitler and Stalin, the Katyn massacre, Soviet inaction during the Warsaw uprising, the treatment of Poles during the Soviet occupation, and so forth.

Nationalism as such can be an ally of democracy and freedom, but in present-day Poland it is a reactionary force. The nationalism of the Partisans is inextricably linked to a program of dictatorial repression and to a demagogic populism pervaded by anti-Jewish and anti-intellectual prejudices. Needless to say, such a platform is utterly irrelevant to the needs of a modern industrial society. Moreover, it is in striking contrast to the nationalist revival in other Communist countries. In Rumania, for example, the new nationalism is not only anti-Russian but also pro-European; it has entailed the rediscovery of the country's Latin heritage and its tradition of close ties with the West. In Czechoslovakia, too, nationalism has assumed a more benign form .The Polish reaction to the "quiet revolution" in Czechoslovakia has provided distressing evidence of the regime's relapse into full conformity with the Soviet line, a relapse motivated in part by the government's reaction to Moczar's provincial chauvinism. In any event, the erstwhile pacemaker of the trend toward greater autonomy has become a bastion of immobilism, a frightened opponent to the movement for change in the Communist world. While the Hungarians have pursued a conciliatory strategy in regard to their wayward comrades in Prague, the Polish leaders have been second only to the rulers of East Germany in their campaign of vilification and intimidation against the Czech reformers.

The liberalization in neighboring Czechoslovakia had had a twofold impact on the Polish political scene. It has inflamed the anger of the powerless intellectuals and youth to a new pitch, and it has frightened the ruling bureaucracy. In the short run, the Polish leadership, torn by factional struggles, is bound to be pushed by its own weakness to tighten the reins and to step up the campaign against "revisionism." In the long run, however, Poland cannot remain isolated from the winds of change blowing through the Danube basin and the Balkans.

In the long run, too, the people of Poland will judge their rulers by what they manage to do about the country's deplorably low standard of living. These rulers may well survive the irreparable damage done to Poland's reputation and self-respect by the recent manifestations of blatant anti-Semitism. But if they continue to fail to provide a decent living for a restive population, the simmering discontent will surely erupt into a conflict which may make the March riots—or even the turbulence of 1956—look like a trifle by comparison. The Jews are leaving Poland now, and when the next crisis arrives, there may be no one to serve as the scapegoat.

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Black Power at Columbia

Stephen Donadio

AT NOON on Tuesday, April 23, 1968, a student rally was held at the sundial on the Columbia University campus—both the time and the place were traditional for such activities—to protest the University administration's disciplining of six radical student leaders, five of them members of the steering committee of the Columbia chapter of Students for a Democratic Society. According to the *Columbia Daily Spectator*, about five hundred people turned out at the sundial and "hundreds of bystanders waited on Low Plaza for the featured event of the afternoon—a march sponsored by Students for a Democratic Society into Low Library, the marble bastion of the Columbia administration."

While the bystanders waited, SDS leaders addressed the crowd. Nick Freudenberg, a sophomore, condemned Columbia's involvement with the Institute for Defense Analyses, an academically-affiliated independent research organization which has engaged in weapons evaluation and riot-control research for the Defense Department.* (Other members of IDA include MIT, Cal Tech, Stanford, Tulane, the University of Michigan, the University of Chicago, Penn State, Princeton, and the University of Illinois.) After Freudenberg had finished, Cicero Wilson, the undergraduate president of the Student's Afro-American Society, began to speak very forcefully against the new gymnasium Columbia was building in Morningside Park. "In a sense," an astute *Spectator* reporter pointed out, "Wilson's presence at the SDS rally was as significant as his address. SDS had never been able to unite with the black militant students, but the gymnasium issue provided a tenuous basis for alliance between the two student groups."†

Just how significant the gymnasium issue turned out to be will be seen, but it is necessary first to provide a little background information. In August 1961, Columbia had arranged to lease from New York City 2.1 acres of public park land in Morningside Park—the park that separates Morningside Heights from West Harlem—at a rental of $3000 a year. On this site, it was agreed, the University was to construct a gymnasium to be shared by the community, but plans regarding the precise nature and design of this facility were apparently not made public.

From relatively early on, the project had its opponents—among the most vociferous was the then Parks Commissioner Thomas P. F. Hoving, who maintained that the arrangements made by Columbia were irregular—but their protests seem largely to have been ignored. Detailed plans for construction were drawn up, contracts were signed, and despite the opposition things seemed to be running smoothly. From all appearances the West Harlem community was satisfied enough; parents who knew about the gym looked forward to a place where their children could go for recreation when they wanted to, and to a swimming pool they could use on long hot summer days.

As time passed, however, black community leaders and politicians from West Harlem began to express their dissatisfaction with the proposed gymnasium. They maintained that the community had not been consulted when Columbia was drawing up the plans, and that the community had not been provided with adequate space in what was supposed to be a shared facility. (Originally the plans called for the community to be given access to 10 or 11 per cent of the gym; as a result of continued protest this was later changed to about 15 per cent.) Moreover, the fact that there were to be two separate entrances to the gymnasium—one for Columbia and one for Harlem—became a touchy point, as did the revelation that the hours during which the community would be allowed to use its part of the facility were to be determined by Columbia. Throughout 1967, opposition to the gym as proposed grew more vocal, more insistent, and more angry, although it is probably true that many residents of

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* The University's institutional involvement with IDA had been the major cause of a previous demonstration on March 27, one of the consequences of which was the disciplining of the six radical leaders. At that time, approximately one hundred students, many of them SDS members, defied President Grayson Kirk's ban on indoor demonstrations and marched into Low Library to protest Columbia's affiliation with IDA. The students, who roamed through the building for almost an hour, were particularly vehement about the fact that President Kirk, and William Burden, a member of the Columbia Board of Trustees, both serve as members of the Executive Committee of IDA—Burden as chairman.

† It should be pointed out, however, that the membership of the group which eventually came to be known as "The Black Students of Hamilton Hall" is not identical with that of the Students' Afro-American Society.

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West Harlem—not all of them misinformed—continued to feel that in the long run the new gym would be a good thing for their children, and saw no reason for the mounting fuss.

Nevertheless, the fuss continued to mount; and for the most part, Columbia's response to it was to insist repeatedly upon the *legality* of what the University was doing. (Ultimately, this was probably crucial: it may well account for the feeling of the black students that the only way they could combat an unresponsive but apparently legally invulnerable administration was by resorting to extreme—and illegal—methods.) Construction of the gym was started late in 1967. Bulldozers soon cleared the site and excavation was begun. During the early months of 1968, several demonstrations were held at the gym site, and numerous persons from Columbia and from the surrounding community were arrested on charges ranging from criminal trespass to felonious assault. In line with the reassertion of its legal right to continue the building of the gym as planned, the University administration seemed determined to press criminal charges against the demonstrators. Instead of discouraging further opposition, however, this merely had the effect of raising the ante, and by the third week in April groups like Harlem CORE were threatening more militant action than any that had yet been seen unless construction of the gymnasium were suspended and the plans for it reconsidered.

AT THE same time, opposition to the gymnasium project was growing within the University community as well. Professor George Collins of the School of Architecture circulated a petition opposing construction of a University gymnasium on public park land, but those students and members of the faculty who signed the petition did so with the sense that it was no more than a gesture. There seemed to be no way of stopping the University administration from doing what it had set out to do. Consequently, in the days immediately preceding April 23, an air of utter powerlessness combined with uneasy expectation settled over the campus. Black militants in Harlem had declared that they were far from giving up, while members of the Columbia administration, when they responded at all, declared that the issue had been decided long ago and that they had every intention of going ahead with the gym construction as planned. Something had to give.

As it turned out, everything did. In the weeks following, with Columbia in almost total chaos, and demands being advanced by any and all parties who felt themselves to be concerned directly or indirectly with the policies of the University in many different areas, it became virtually impossible to sort out the issues which had precipitated and were serving to sustain the crisis. Both the local and the national press came to place varying degrees of emphasis on the demand for student power, on the students' hatred of the Vietnam war, their disgust at the "bankruptcy of corporate liberalism," etc. But it must be stressed that from a strategic point of view the central issue in the Columbia crisis was the issue of the gymnasium, and the most significant role in the crisis was played by the black students. For when the black students—if only for one brief moment—joined with the white radical SDS, they made direct action inevitable and at the same time virtually assured the success of the demonstration.

LET US examine this hypothesis first in relation to the role played by the white students. Consider the sequence of events. After the crowd at the sundial had marched to Low Library (which had been locked for the occasion) and there been confronted first by some three or four hundred counter-demonstrators, then by three campus security guards who prevented them from entering the building, someone suggested that they march to the gym. Approximately three hundred of the demonstrators, led by a group of black students, did so. According to the *Spectator* account, the demonstrators reached the gym site at roughly 12:40 P.M. and proceeded to tear down about forty feet of the chain-link fence surrounding the construction area. The police came, there were several skirmishes, and one student was arrested.

As he had attempted to do previously, Mark Rudd, the newly elected chairman of Columbia SDS, began to list what he conceived to be the group's available options at that time; but the group was clearly out of his control. Rudd proposed that a student strike be called for Thursday, he was shouted down, and finally the demonstrators marched back to the sundial, where they regathered briefly. Once again Rudd attempted to present the alternatives open to the demonstrators, but, according to the *Spectator*, "midway through the speech, someone standing behind Rudd yelled, 'To Hamilton'* and the group suddenly began to move toward Hamilton Hall, crowding into the lobby of the building, chanting 'IDA Must Go.'"

The crowd grew more and more dense and it gradually became known that the demonstrators intended to hold Acting Dean Henry S. Coleman as a hostage until the student arrested at the gym site was released. In the meantime, a steering committee consisting of seven of the demonstrators was established, and this group quickly proceeded to draw up the famous list of six demands: 1) that no disciplinary action be taken by the University administration against the student demonstrators; 2) that the ban on indoor demonstrations be rescinded; 3) that all future decisions

* Hamilton Hall is the building in which many of the classrooms and faculty offices and all of the administrative offices for Columbia College are located.

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regarding discipline be made in open hearings presided over by faculty and students; 4) that all University ties with the Institute for Defense Analyses be severed; 5) that construction of the gymnasium in Morningside Park be terminated; 6) that criminal charges be dropped against all those persons arrested during demonstrations at the gym site. By early evening there seemed to be little question that the students intended to hold Dean Coleman and remain in the building until these six demands were met.

It was at this point that two strategic moves were made by the black students which transformed the situation from an unpleasant but minor campus incident into the gravest crisis in the University's history.

During the night the demonstrators divided into two groups: black and white. In the early hours of Wednesday morning the blacks informed the white students that they had decided to barricade Hamilton Hall. After careful deliberation, they said, they had come to believe that this would be the most effective way of continuing the demonstration. The white students found themselves divided on this question. Many of them felt that it was not advisable to employ a tactic which would involve disruption of the University and as a consequence perhaps lead to a head-on confrontation with the faculty and other students. Such a tactic, they argued, would end the possibility of "dialogue" among the various groups within the University, would alienate potentially valuable (and perhaps even necessary) allies, and would therefore result in the creation of a consensus hostile to the demonstrators. Discussion of this question continued, however; several votes were taken. And in the end a substantial number of the white students decided that they were prepared to accept the idea of barricading Hamilton Hall.

But in the meantime the black students had come to another crucial conclusion: they had decided that the white students should get out of Hamilton Hall. They wanted to hold the building by themselves, they said, in order to focus the protest on what they considered to be the immediate issue: Columbia's encroachment on the black community of Harlem. Moreover, they were not at all convinced that the students and faculty at Columbia were on the whole any less "racist" than the administration. So far as they were concerned, "dialogue" was no longer really possible: a confrontation was required to "dramatize" the issue of the University's relation to the surrounding community since all peaceful means of protesting that relation had unquestionably failed. The gym was being built, Columbia was buying up the neighborhood: these things had to be stopped. The black students argued that they had more at stake in the immediate struggle than the white students did, and that they were consequently prepared to risk more and to go much further—to go very far indeed—to insure the success of their protest. And so the white students were asked to leave and told that if they wanted to do something that was relevant to the real, as opposed to the symbolic, issues involved in the protest, then they should take and hold as many buildings as they could.

In addition to fatigue and a certain amount of shock, the two to three hundred white demonstrators who filed slowly out of Hamilton toward Low Library undoubtedly experienced a variety of more or less complex emotions—among them, wounded pride. It was clear that they had to do something equal in militancy to what the blacks were about to do. And so, at approximately six o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, April 24, the group massed outside the security entrance to Low. Evidently a number of the demonstrators were a little queasy about what was happening, for when one of them picked up a sign and smashed through a windowpane in the security door, the undeniable, unmistakable sound of the shattering glass caused "more than fifty students, disturbed and shocked" (*Spectator*) to refuse to enter the building. But most of the students did enter, and those who did proceeded to President Kirk's private suite of offices; they broke in and barricaded the door behind them.

An apparently decisive move. But the white students seem to have been unsure of themselves, even at that point: they do not seem to have been completely decided about their precise objectives and about precisely how far they were willing to go to achieve them. Were they prepared to be arrested, for example? To resist the police? It was rumored that a bust was imminent. According to the *Spectator*, "at 6:45 a small force of New York City police arrived at Low, awaiting instructions from the University administration. One hour later, the police moved upstairs to President Kirk's office, broke down the student barricades and entered the President's suite. More than one hundred demonstrators jumped out of the side windows of his office and were not pursued." (Among those who jumped out the window and fled was Mark Rudd: clearly he would have a lot to live down later.) A hard-core group of twenty-seven students refused to leave when the police arrived, however: they sat down on the floor of one of the secretaries' offices and would not be moved. A few policemen remained in the office with them until later in the day, but no arrests were made and no one who left was prevented from re-entering.

Seen in terms of the possibilities they defined and those they excluded, these initial events in the crisis were really the most critical. Everything that happened later followed inevitably. Once the University had been effectively disrupted, it was but one short step to

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complete paralysis. Once grievances were being voiced with passion and perhaps for the first time even listened to, *all* grievances rose to the surface: every group and splinter group demanded its due. All the smoldering resentment and loathing which had been collecting over the years welled up and spilled over. For weeks the University existed in what may be described as a state of almost total, almost cosmological nausea. People protested everything from the Vietnam war to tenure policy, from "imperialist aggression" to the structure of the University. In an institution where apparently everybody but a handful of administrators had been excluded from "the decision-making process," suddenly everybody demanded to be included.

On Wednesday night (April 24), students from the School of Architecture refused to leave Avery Hall; they gradually seized the building and thus joined the demonstration. No doubt some of them remembered—or had heard about—the attempt made several years ago by students and professors of architecture to protest the proposed design for Columbia's new Business School. At that time, students and professors had picketed and signed petitions, but the building had gone up anyway, even though it was (and continues to be) regarded as one of the most hideous ever conceived. Similar disapproval had been expressed again and again in relation to the proposed gymnasium, and had been similarly ignored.

In the early hours of Thursday morning (April 25), a group composed mainly of graduate students, many in History, occupied Fayerweather Hall (where many of the History department offices are located) and barricaded themselves in. In addition to the announced political issues, many of these graduate students were concerned with increasing student participation in decisions regarding their own education, especially in matters of curriculum and degree requirements. At Columbia they had been made painfully aware of the discrepancy between the kinds of moral and existential decisions they had to make each day as men (Should I protest the war? Should I be arrested? What if I turn in my draft card? What about my family? Should I emigrate to Canada? What would I be like after five years in prison?) and the kinds of decisions they had to make as students running what seemed to them to be the meaningless obstacle course of graduate education. They were dealing, too, with the powerlessness they felt as graduate students at Columbia, expressing their disgust with the dreary "institutional" quality of the education they were receiving and about which they had never been consulted. This sense of powerlessness, when linked with the fact of Columbia's notoriously retrograde program of financial aid, accounted for the feeling of many graduate students that they were not only being ignored but taken for granted and rooked as well.

But such issues, although undoubtedly important, might have the effect of diverting one's attention from the real workings of the Columbia situation. There is no question that the issues raised during the course of the crisis—from IDA participation to the governance of the University by a Board of self-elected Trustees—were, many of them, real and even significant. But the welter of issues of lesser and greater magnitude that eventually emerged when things broke wide open tends to obscure the fact that it was one issue in particular which made the blow-up possible (some would say, inevitable): the race issue. None of the other issues—and probably not all of them together—could have generated a crisis on the scale of the one which occurred at Columbia.

THE QUESTION of the University's involvement with the Institute for Defense Analyses, for instance, tied as it was to the more general, far-reaching question of the University's participation in the Vietnam war effort, had been problematic for some time: but no one would have wanted to close down the University on that account. As their hesitation in the early stages of the crisis would seem to indicate, not even the more radical white students were eager to engage in actions of that kind. And if they had, few if any faculty members would have supported them. For many faculty members at Columbia, including some of the most radical, the IDA issue was trivial, largely lacking in political significance. And in any case, an administration-faculty committee—the Henkin Committee—had been set up to investigate the University's relations to external organizations and to make recommendations regarding future policy in this area. Most faculty members would surely have been content to wait until the Henkin Committee report appeared—after all, it might well have recommended severing University ties of the kind in question—before deciding on a position, much less a course of action, with respect to IDA.

As for the issues of student discipline, no one can seriously believe that any widespread interest, let alone support, could have been mobilized for them at all had they been the only issues (or even if they had been linked with the IDA issue). The same is true of the ban on indoor demonstrations, and—perhaps to a lesser extent—of the demands which emerged later for greater student participation in the University's decision-making processes.

It goes without saying, however, that all the ingredients necessary for an explosion were present at Columbia, and in abundance. Each of the issues mentioned carried a certain charge. But a fuse was required, and that fuse turned out to be the proposed gymnasium in Morningside Park. Here was an issue about which a very large proportion of the University community, faculty members and students alike, could agree, despite

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their many differences in other areas. (It should be noted that not even the counter-demonstrators at Columbia—a group which appeared to contain a significant percentage of the larger athletes, as well as numerous supporters from the Law and Business Schools—seemed very enthusiastic about the new gym. Indeed, throughout the crisis spokesmen for this group maintained that they were not necessarily objecting to the demands made by the demonstrators—except the one for amnesty—but to the tactics used.) What was at least as important, though, was the fact that unlike many of the other issues the gymnasium was not at all theoretical: it was an utterly concrete issue, the implications and possible consequences of which could be immediately grasped in the appearance of H. Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael on the University campus; in the black crowds chanting in the streets; in the presence at rallies in support of the black students of Victor Solomon of Harlem CORE and the Harlem Mau-Mau leader, Charles 37X Kenyatta; in the unsettling rumor that there were firearms in Hamilton Hall; in the placards grimly warning, "Gym Goes Up, Columbia Comes Down."

It is, indeed, only in terms of the race issue that the otherwise puzzling behavior of both the Columbia administration and the faculty can be understood.

At the very beginning of the demonstration on April 23, when it was still essentially an SDS affair, the administration, though concerned, was confident that it could keep things under control. After all, the antagonism between SDS and the Columbia administration had been overt and unambiguous for a long time; but all year long, through skillful maneuvering, Vice-President David B. Truman had managed to avert the showdown SDS appeared intent on having. But as soon as the black students became involved, the situation changed entirely, with the administration placed on the defensive. And as more and more black students—and more and more black community leaders—began to appear during the afternoon and evening of April 23, things became even touchier. Whereas at the beginning the administration might have decided that it was not going to call the police because there was no reason to do so yet, now other considerations had to be weighed in any decision they might ultimately reach. But by the next morning—Wednesday, April 24—many of the administration's options had literally vanished overnight as a result of the black students' expulsion of the whites from Hamilton Hall. So long as there had been long-haired radical white students mixed in with the blacks, the blacks had looked like students; by themselves, they simply looked like blacks. That made the prospect of mass arrests extremely unappealing, for it seemed quite within the realm of probability that a lot of TV footage and front-page photographs of young blacks being led into police vans or up against the wall with their hands above their heads would have serious repercussions for the University, whose relations with the West Harlem community were not now at their zenith. Some members of the administration undoubtedly feared reprisals from the black militants—always available at times like these—only a few blocks away.

As for the Columbia faculty, it did not really enter the picture until Thursday afternoon, when an Ad Hoc Faculty Group was established, made up of concerned faculty members for the most part fairly liberal in outlook, at least in relation to the Columbia faculty as a whole. But very few of the members of the Ad Hoc Faculty Group felt anything like sympathy for SDS and the strike leaders; the feelings of most members ranged from distrust to downright antipathy. And Mark Rudd certainly did not do wonders for his cause when on Friday night—the night after a group of faculty members had been charged and clubbed attempting to keep the police out of Low Library—he addressed the Ad Hoc Group and told them that so far, talks with their representatives had amounted in general to "bullshit."

On the other hand, the faculty appeared to be on the whole rather favorably impressed with the black students. Although they too were utterly intransigent, their intransigence was felt to be qualified by their obvious seriousness: they seemed to have none of the "wise guy" qualities of Mark Rudd and some of the other white strike leaders. Moreover, from the outset faculty support for the black students' position on the gym issue was one of the most constant and uncomplicated factors in crisis. However they might differ on the other issues involved (amnesty, open disciplinary hearings, etc.), on the gym issue the faculty stood more or less united, and from the beginning their statements to this effect were unequivocal and firm. It is indicative of the position taken by those members of the faculty most concerned about the crisis and most involved in attempts to resolve it that when, on the afternoon of Wednesday, April 24, the Columbia College faculty met in emergency session, in addition to placing itself on record against amnesty, it recommended "immediate suspension of on-site excavation of the gymnasium facility in Morningside Park."

Whether the College faculty did so out of fear of the demonstrations threatened by local black militants or simply on the basis of their judgment of the validity of the black students' demand is impossible to determine. By this time, these different aspects of the question had fused: they had become impossible to separate. Nevertheless, for many of the more liberal faculty members especially, the conviction that gym construction must be stopped was accompained by the

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sense, vague but unmistable, largely unacknowledged but unquestionably felt, that although the white students were probably wrong to have used the extreme tactics they had (perhaps because the issues they were most concerned with did not appear to warrant them), the black students had had no choice but to do so.

Indeed, the fact is that for many people in the University the presence of the black students in Hamilton Hall provided the entire demonstration with an aura of legitimacy which it would not otherwise have had. There are a variety of reasons for this. First of all, the black students conducted themselves with a great deal more dignity than did many of the white students.* Secondly, their relations with the outside world were highly formalized; they did not speak as individuals but as a group. Access to Hamilton Hall, furthermore, was very strictly limited. The shades on all the windows were generally drawn. From outside the building looked as though it had been shut down and deserted; there were very few signs of life. (The only decoration suggestive of rebellion was a sign on the front door which read "Malcolm X University.") And by all accounts, the discipline inside was very tight. While white student demonstrators wandered in and out of the other occupied buildings and roamed the campus, wearing red armbands, jeering back at counter-demonstrators, shaking their Blakean locks, and looking generally flamboyant, the black students stayed put. And while the demonstrators in other buildings often dangled their feet over window ledges, waved to one another, and shouted "Up Against the Wall, Motherfucker!" in chorus at the police, the black students rarely if ever showed themselves at all.

IN ADDITION to all this, unlike many of the white strike leaders, the black student leaders were not very much inclined toward revolutionary rhetoric—which only served to confuse many people anyway. As Ray Brown, a spokesman for the black group, later observed,† "it was clearly realized by those in Hamilton Hall that what was going on was a demonstration, not 'the revolution.'" This made it harder for the press and for those hostile to the demonstration to identify the blacks as young hoodlums and rebels against all authority who desired nothing less than the violent overthrow of the government. And what made it even harder for the press, which at Columbia seemed to make it its business to understand everything too quickly, was the substantial support received by the black students from some very respectable politicians, as well as social workers, civil servants, and local community leaders.

In this connection, not the least of the factors which accounted for the special position occupied by the black students in the minds of many members of the University community was the fact that throughout the crisis the Hamilton Hall group maintained absolute autonomy. They were not to be confused with demonstrators in the other buildings: they had to be dealt with separately. No one was authorized to speak for them, and they spoke only for themselves. While the other four occupied buildings were presumably all represented by the Strike Co-ordinating Committee, Hamilton Hall was not. Indeed, the black students even had their own list of demands, from which two of the six demands mentioned previously were dropped because the black students felt they might be construed simply as "student power" demands.

The implications of these differences between the blacks and the white radicals are clear. For the black students, the most important issue involved in the protest action was the gym issue, which they regarded as "symbolic" only insofar as it typified Columbia's relations with the surrounding community. Bill Sales, representing the Hamilton Hall group in an interview, observed of the arrangement which the University had made with New York City authorities to lease land for the gym site in Morningside Park that "the method of acquiring land here is significant, as is the fact that Columbia got it for very little. . . . Moreover, Columbia will, over the next decade or so, employ this same method—or similar methods—to acquire land in the surrounding community in order to expand the University's living accommodations: in other words, to turn West Harlem into a white enclave. In this way, Columbia will be decreasing the supply of ghetto housing while the number of people who need that housing increases; and this can only perpetuate the dilapidated conditions and the social pathology that you find in the ghetto."

Ray Brown, in the course of the same interview, went on to say that "the black students are specifically opposed to Columbia University's use of its position of political strength to take advantage of the powerlessness of the black community. It's our position that insofar as we are able to we will either stop that kind of usurpation of power or focus attention on it by dramatizing it in the manner we did." Action of this kind, however, required that those persons who

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* In all fairness to the white students, however, it ought to be pointed out that whereas the blacks were pretty much left alone until the police came, the white students were subject to almost constant attack and harassment by counter-demonstrators. The demonstrators in Low Library, for instance (who were crowded in to begin with), were pelted with eggs and the like almost as soon as they set foot on the ledge outside the windows; in addition, in an attempt to starve out the students inside, the counter-demonstrators surrounded the building and would not allow food or medical supplies to get past them. Under the circumstances, such behavior was inclined to engender an equally undignified response.

† In an interview conducted by the author and included in "Columbia: Seven Interviews," *Partisan Review*, Summer 1968—ED.

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engaged in it identify themselves primarily not as students but as the oppressed. For the black students, such an identification was not really theoretical (as it was for most of the white students). "I would say," Ray Brown observed, "that black students at this University have demonstrated that they view themselves essentially as an extension of the black community and that their primary identity is with the black community and not with the University community. And in that sense there are . . . certain obvious things that differentiate them from white students, who will generally, I suppose, view themselves primarily as members of an academic community."

For the kind of demonstration which occurred at Columbia to have taken place at all, then, it was absolutely necessary that for a time at least the University be regarded as something *alien*. Interestingly enough, it was some of the more conservative observers of the situation at Columbia who first became aware of this aspect of it when they perceived that by refusing to acknowledge the legitimate authority of the administration to discipline them, the students were in effect denying their membership in the "University community"—or in any case denying that they owed it their primary allegiance in all things. At least initially, however, for all but a handful of the thousands of white students who eventually became involved in the demonstration, the prospect of detaching oneself from a community in which one was relatively secure and comfortable and in whose values one presumably shared would have presented extraordinary (and probably even insurmountable) psychological difficulties.

But no such difficulties existed for most of the black students—at least not to the same degree. In terms of their own psychological relation to it, the University was less a community than it was an institution; and if only by extension, they experienced it that way. (Years ago, when there were very few black students at Columbia—especially in the College—this would not have been the case. The explanation for the change lies not only in the increased militancy of the black community, but in Columbia's own policy in recent years of intensive recruiting in "disadvantaged" areas. Ironically enough, as a result of this policy, a new black community within the Univeristy community was formed. Consequently, whereas at one time the isolated Negro at Columbia would have had to assert—in one way or another and often a little desperately—that he was really "one of the boys," lately new possibilities had opened up.)

Thus, by presenting themselves as spokesmen within the University for those persons outside who had spoken but whose voices had not been heard, the black students at Columbia, more than any other single group involved in the crisis, managed to convince thousands of students and faculty members of the reality of the University's existence as an institution operating in the larger society, rather than a community where blacks and whites could live together as equals and friends, a community of fair-minded and just men. If, as the blacks reasoned, Columbia was not such a community, then Columbia would have to be changed. And from that conviction, all else followed.

It is in the context of this idea of the University as an alien institution that the tactic the black students introduced into the situation—the decision to occupy and barricade a building—must be understood. The black students were bringing what was essentially a Harlem protest (even if only the most militant members of the community were involved) home to the University. And in that sense the black students were acting for the militants outside. If this is so, then it is possible to argue that by barricading Hamilton Hall the black students were acting out, in a highly stylized way, the potential for violence against the University which already existed in the community. Moreover, this argument might continue, what the black students did may well have defused a really explosive situation, as well as improved Columbia's "image" in the eyes of the community and in the long run made it a safer place to be, since they managed to convince the militants outside that there were people inside the University who had their interests at heart, and who were willing to act for them.

In the long run, perhaps so. But there can be no doubt that the more immediate consequences of the tactic were a lot less heartening. Shutting down the University only invited confrontations—after all, that was the point of the tactic—and there were many people on the Columbia campus (a large number of whom acted out of various forms of frustration which were politically wholly irrelevant) eager to accept that invitation.* Moreover, although on April 30 the black students were arrested and led out of Hamilton Hall without incident, this was far from being the case at the other buildings involved in the protest, where cracked skulls and bloody faces were more the rule. To be sure, to a great extent this was due to the brutality of the police, but the point here is that the tactic of barricading buildings itself seemed to generate a range of possibilities of this

* It is necessary, however, to distinguish here between the kind of violence employed by the counter-demonstrators—real physical violence, directed against persons—and the "violence" involved in barricading a building. Significantly enough, the administration at Columbia did not choose to discipline the counter-demonstrators—who were fed by old alumni—even though their actions increased tensions and disrupted the University as much as anything else.

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kind, possibilities that had not existed before (though the *potential* for bloodshed obviously had). The decision to barricade Hamilton Hall unquestionably established a dangerous precedent at the University—as may easily be seen in the reoccupation of that building on May 21-22. And so far as Harlem's relation to Columbia is concerned, the action taken by the black students, which led, in turn, to other actions, taken by other people, may well have unleashed forces beyond their control: after all, if its own students felt compelled to act against the University, then why should anyone else feel any qualms about doing so?

BUT THE most troubling aspect of this demonstration is really the amnesty demand. According to Ray Brown, the position taken by the black students on amnesty "is a moral one. We believe that the University must grant amnesty because by virtue of its racist policy toward the community the University is responsible for the situation that developed on this campus. . . . We are not responsible for what happened. We are not morally culpable: the University is. And for that reason we cannot acknowledge the University's right to take any punitive sanctions against us." For their part, of course, the white students also demanded amnesty, although their reasons for doing so were somewhat more obscure: they maintained that the University administration was an "illegitimate authority" and therefore had no right to punish them.

In either case, the amnesty demand, which predictably enough was one of the most serious obstacles to resolution of the crisis, is defensible only on purely pragmatic grounds; I myself would have to support it on those grounds. Morally and politically, it is ridiculous. Nevertheless, it typifies certain notions which have crept into our political thinking recently (probably as a result of the Vietnam War, which so many people found morally repugnant and yet which was being waged despite their protests with ever-increasing intransigence on the part of the U.S. government): for example, the notion that the individual's conception of justice, and the dictates of his conscience, must be served at any cost. Many members of the Strike Committee were explicit about this, and the "Why We Strike" pamphlet they issued is quite clear about it: "Strict civil libertarians argue that those who commit civil disobedience must suffer the legal consequences even if their cause is just. But we say people should not be disciplined for doing what is necessary to achieve what is right." The formulation is a trifle loose, but the thinking is recognizable enough: it differs only in degree (but not in kind) from that of the religious fanatic who feels compelled to act on messages he has received from God.

The position of the black students is no less disturbing. In their version of what happened at Columbia, the entire situation, including the action which they took to rectify it, was the responsibility of the University administration. This claim of moral exemption has a number of unsettling implications, not the least of which is that once a man is relieved of the burden of individual conscience and responsibility, he becomes capable of many forms of action of which he would not otherwise be capable. The resulting state of mind should not be unfamiliar to anyone who has been watching TV these past few years: it is the state of mind of men at war.

ONCE THE University went to pieces it looked very much as though the events at Columbia were continuous with student rebellions in other parts of the world (Paris, Berlin). But the origins of the Columbia crisis, and from a strategic point of view the central issue involved, were quite different.

The logic of what happened at Columbia is not especially difficult to trace. On the afternoon and early evening of Tuesday, April 23, for a variety of reasons, the Columbia administration—which until very recently seemed relatively liberal, at least as such groups generally go—hesitated to move against the growing demonstration. Perhaps they hesitated out of concern for the safety of Dean Coleman, whom the demonstrators had taken as a hostage; perhaps they were extremely reluctant to call in city police to control a University situation.* Whatever their thinking was that day, however, it seems obvious that one of the paramount considerations which led to their initial indecision was the involvement of the black students. There is little question that the administraton would have moved against white students occupying Hamilton without a second thought. But because the black students were involved in the use of this tactic, the administration's first response was the expression of what seems to have been a combination of guilt and fear.

The fear has already been discussed—it was the fear of reprisals from some of the more militant groups in the black community. The element of guilt was apparent in the administration's half-

* In retrospect, of course, hesitation on these grounds appears absurd at best, since when the police finally were used it was not by the tens but by the hundreds. Nonetheless, at the time many people—faculty members in particular—took the view that the campus should not be "violated" by the police. It is legitimate to wonder if they would have been inclined to take this view if the demonstrators who were occupying the buildings had been, say, supporters of George Wallace. Moreover, while it seems clear that many faculty members were extremely anxious about the possibility of violence if the police were called, it is evident that this possibility increased substantially as time went on and more and more students became involved in the demonstration.

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hearted defense of the gym construction. Many high officials at Columbia undoubtedly felt that they were (literally) on shaky ground here; it is probable that for a long time they had had grave misgivings about the whole project. In past months, as opposition had grown more insistent and definite, they had seemed to grow less and less sure of themselves: most of the time their replies to opponents of the gym would take the form not of enthusiastic assertion but of uneasy rationalization and insistence on the legality of the undertaking. (Lately, of course, the "defense" of the gym construction has consisted largely of the rather depressing lament that Columbia could not get out of the project now even if it wanted to, since that would mean hundreds of thousands of dollars lost as a result of the contractual obligations already made, not to mention the millions in alumni contributions that would be cancelled.)

In addition, there was the point that you did not go out recruiting black students only to expel them the first time they broke the rules. Such considerations—combined with the fact that the administration suddenly found itself caught between a Board of Trustees which was on the whole more conservative, and a large group of faculty members more liberal, than it was—indicated that the administration was so full of internal contradictions that it would never be able to act in any clear or coherent way. And at the crucial moment, the administration froze. Like a wooden soldier, it stood at rigid attention with its arms glued to its sides. For a while it remained in this position, its eyes darting about wildly in its head. When it finally began to act again, it could do nothing but flail its arms pathetically, or (depending on your point of view) strike out in blind rage at everyone in sight.

WHEN THE administration failed to act initially, in effect it relinquished its authority. As a consequence, it lost control of the situation completely. Once this happened, it should have been realistic enough to acknowledge the fact and allow the Ad Hoc Faculty Group to resolve the crisis in whatever way it could. Undoubtedly, this would have required some concessions on the part of the administration (as it would have required others from the students), including amnesty—or something like it—for the demonstrators. But such concessions might well have averted the bloody confrontation with the police on April 30th. (This first bust was as ineffectual as it was violent. It may have ended the occupation, but—as is clearly indicated by the sit-in and consequent arrests at a local University-owned building and the reoccupation of Hamilton Hall on May 21-22 which led to the even more terrifying second bust —it certainly did not end the crisis.)

But the administration, perhaps as a result of pressure from the trustees, rejected the Ad Hoc Faculty Group Resolution,* thus pitting itself against the liberal faculty as well as the students. Moreover, after both the newly-created Executive Committee of the Faculty and the Joint Committee on Disciplinary Affairs recommended that criminal trespass charges against the demonstrators be dropped as a first step toward reestablishing mutual trust at the University, the administration's decision (once again, perhaps, determined by the Trustees, but the administration does not seem to have disagreed) to press those charges can only be construed as vindictive and foolish. Their decision in this case seems clearly to reflect a desire for revenge against those students who had caused them to appear so ineffectual. Ultimately, of course, the refusal to drop criminal charges led to the reoccupation of Hamilton Hall, a second major bust, and the outbreak of open war between students and police.

BUT THE significance of what happened at Columbia is not simply to be found in the analysis of what, tactically, led to what (although it is revealing that especially by those most familiar with it, the situation is usually discussed only in those terms). The implications of the crisis extend beyond the highly specific situation at Columbia, and beyond its foreseeable effects on higher education in general.

To begin with, these events offer a clear indication (not that one was really necessary) of the almost irresistible appeal at this point of direct-action tactics as a means of resolving social and political questions. These tactics, and the mystique which accompanies them, represent one of the legacies of the civil-rights movement, in which mass civil disobedience was traditionally used to protest local laws or practices which violated rights guaranteed by the Constitution. In the early 60's, tactics of this kind were justified as a form of recourse to a higher legal authority; since that time, however, they have had a tendency to become a law unto themselves. Certainly this was the case at Columbia, where in the eyes of many socially and politically committed people direct-action tactics had clearly come to possess a kind of absolute legitimacy.

The same may be said for a certain kind of political rhetoric, which is as extreme as the tac-

* The students also rejected the Ad Hoc Group's offer (the black students never even replied to it), but this would not have made the slightest difference in its effect if the administration had accepted it. Section IV of the Ad Hoc Faculty Group Resolution of April 28 clearly stated: "These proposals being in our judgment a just solution to the crisis our University is presently undergoing, we pledge that: (a) If the President will not accept these proposals, we shall take all measures within our several consciences to prevent the use of force to vacate these buildings; (b) If the President does accept our proposals but the students in the buildings refuse to evacuate these buildings, we shall refuse further to interpose ourselves between the administration and the students."

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tics it is used to justify. Such a rhetoric serves not so much to describe situations as to create them. Once the charge of "racism" was introduced into the Columbia situation, for example, that situation was changed: it became simplified (or "polarized," to use the current Columbia word). Accusations of this kind have the effect of setting up a head-on confrontation of the Good *vs.* Evil type.

The existence of such a situation requires the cooperation of all parties involved, however. At Columbia, the charge of "racism" stopped a vaguely liberal administration dead in its tracks. (A really conservative administration, of course, would have paid no attention at all to the charge: it would have acted against the students immediately—no matter who they were—never doubting for a moment that what it was doing was right.) As a result, the charge seemed to stick: hesitation at that crucial point could only be taken as acknowledgement of guilt. So far as the students who demonstrated earlier or later were concerned, they had no trouble whatsoever acting once they had levelled the charge (and been reinforced in their conviction of its validity by the administration's shakiness); things became very simple for them. All other moral categories suddenly dropped out of sight: moral considerations which appeared less grandiose became irrelevant and as a consequence all questions became, ultimately, *tactical* questions. The process bears a striking resemblance to the one which occurred after the U.S. government asserted that the Vietcong were wholly and solely the agents of North Vietnamese aggression.

IN THEIR own way, the press and the news media in general have unquestionably helped to encourage this tendency toward more extreme words and deeds. Once things got going at Columbia, the reporters and cameramen appeared like flies, eager for good action footage and for the most explosive statements they could get. They had not been very interested in the previous demonstrations at the gym site: not enough was happening there. And as the black students in Hamilton quickly learned during the occupation (when H. Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael had to read the students' own press releases because the students themselves could not get them into the newspapers), the press really wasn't very interested unless you were famous or what you had to say was totally outrageous or inflammatory. The reporters at Columbia seemed a little disappointed that the black students did not appear wearing *dashikes* and necklaces made of teeth: *that,* from their point of view, would have been news.

The press coverage of the events at Columbia also points up the exacerbating effect in situations of this kind of the distortions, more or less gross, which appear in the news media daily. (Few people who experienced the crisis will ever read the New York *Times* in quite the same way again.) For the black students, these inaccuracies and misrepresentations were particularly frustrating. "If this kind of distortion continues," Ray Brown observed, "then the only thing that's likely is a continued escalation of the conflict because in effect the main participants are being ignored." And Bill Sales took a similar view. "Not only the local press but the national press," he said, "has in effect defined the problem here as related to student power issues: that is, as a problem involving young student rebels, alienated from their parents and from society in general, striking out in random fashion against authority. If this is the way the press will define the Columbia protest for the national community, then the basic issue of the University's relationship to the community will never be dealt with and will someday explode unexpectedly in a nationwide fashion. . . . One of the legitimate avenues of protest," he continued, "is . . . the press and publicity. In many ways, it's the last avenue of protest before more drastic action. And if the press can no longer serve this essential function—the muckraking function—then the country is in for a hard time and we're all in very deep difficulty."

IT IS an irony from which no pleasure can be derived that while intense discussions of strategy and tactics made continuous, unrelenting demands on the minds of many of the most intelligent and sensitive people at Columbia, in the end the only group involved in the confrontation to get almost everything it asked for was the (relatively) extreme right wing, whose adherents were most mindless and most brutal in their response to events, and most hysterical in their alleged defense of "property rights." As if at the request of this group, the student demonstrators were not granted amnesty, the police were called, the buildings were cleared, criminal charges were pressed, there were many suspensions, and now expulsions seem in the offing. The possibility that a substantial number of the more liberal faculty will resign—not all of them for political reasons—is beginning to look very likely. The crisis at Columbia is far from over, and despite the optimistic long-range predictions of some detached observers, it seems clear that when (and if) the University opens this fall, at its heart, as a community, it will not be any more flexible, or any stronger, or any more just than it was last spring.

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Letter From Israel

Edward Grossman

IN APRIL of this year, a meeting was held in Jerusalem which had a proper official name but which the Israeli man in the street was pleased to call "The Millionaires' Conference." This was a convenient and not unfriendly epithet, and it was accurate so far as it went—which is to say that among the couple of hundred businessmen who made the trip from Europe, South Africa, and America, presumably no one had to fret about his solvency while he was away. What the label did not reveal, however (and what may be more important), is that many of these businessmen had never been to Israel before, indeed had never been involved in Zionism at all. Their new interest may be set down in part, of course, to the general quickening of Diaspora response toward Israel following the Six-Day War and the reunification of Jerusalem; nevertheless, both the businessmen themselves and members of the Israeli government, which sponsored the meeting, insisted repeatedly that the conference was not meant to be just another occasion for one of those emotional, and successful, appeals for money that were well known even before June 1967. The purpose, instead, was to begin changing the relationship between the Israeli economy and its overseas markets and suppliers, a job which, if undertaken seriously, would demand a thorough reform of business, political, and labor practices in Israel, and would have unpredictable effects on many other aspects of the Israeli scene. "What they have to do," one of the Americans (who happened not to be a Jew) said with nice directness, "is rationalize their whole damn system." Apparently the Israeli government, in the course of the meetings, made convincing noises indicating its readiness to do at least what is necessary to make investment—which has always fallen somewhat ambiguously between sound business and almsgiving—profitable; before the conference broke up it was announced that about a hundred new companies had been formed to deal in textiles, scientific instruments, electronics, and chemicals, with the expectation that they would be able to compete on the world market. Satisfied with what they had accomplished, and not unaware of the time and place, some of the usually hardnosed visitors were seen to choke up during the closing ceremony, which consisted of a children's choir singing the song which one hears everywhere in Israel and which is threatening to replace *Hatikvah* as the national anthem: *Yerushalayim Shel Zahav* ("Jerusalem the Golden").

In any cool analysis, these men would still seem to be running a considerable risk. For while the readers of headlines in New York (or, for that matter, in Moscow) may believe that the Israelis are the last word in efficiency, anyone who has had closer experience knows better. If there is really going to be the kind of improvement that will justify the birth of all these companies, then some of the most deeply entrenched, not to say sacred, habits and institutions in Israel will have to be treated very roughly. Among them are the incredible bureaucracy; the ubiquitous, quasi-official labor federation, Histadrut, which has viewed all private enterprise, if not all change, with extreme suspicion, and has had the power to harass and discourage; the host of backbiting agencies; and not least the popular Israeli assumption that the charity of Diaspora Jews will keep the economy and standard of living at artificially high levels. All these factors had a lot to do with bringing on the unemployment and dislocated balance of payments that were hurting Israel badly before Nasser blockaded the Gulf of Aqaba—an act which set off the series of events that ended with most of the pertinent facts and statistics in the Middle East being given a violent shake. Indeed, so rapid and astonishing was the turn in the economy following the war that one might be led to speculate whether Nasser is not actually Israel's rumored "Man in Cairo." Tourism now is booming; so is construction and development; the foreign currency reserve is healthier; there are even signs that trade with the Arabs—a much hoped-for event—is taking place at an accelerating tempo in Gaza and across the Jordan River, for all the world as if El-Fatah and the Arab Legion were not still making war on Israel.

None of this, however, necessarily means that the shortcomings in the Israeli system are not still operative, or that they will now be easily corrected. One meets persuasive pessimists here who say that only divine intervention could move the Histadrut, for example, to give up its obstructionism—and unfortunately Israel used up her credit with God on the battlefield last June. Admittedly, the reforms that have already been carried out (increased depreciation rates, reduced income tax on profits ploughed back into development, a freeze on wages) seemed unattainable a year ago; still, most of the basic changes are yet to be made. Does the optimism one feels, then, spring from sympathy alone? Maybe not, for there is in fact movement, change is definitely in the wind, and to a lesser or greater degree it will probably touch everything.

IT WILL TOUCH everything, that is, except the institution that may seem the strangest and most vulnerable to the eyes of an economic reformer, especially if he is an expert consultant imported from the U.S. That institution is

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EDWARD GROSSMAN *reviewed Ronald Sanders's* Israel: The View from Masada *in the February 1967* COMMENTARY. *Mr. Grossman is currently living in Israel.*

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the kibbutz. Taken all together, the kibbutzim are costing the government dear, for few of them pay their own way and most are subsidized. Furthermore, the kibbutzim are having problems recruiting new blood. Adult immigrants from Arab countries (who form the majority of immigrants who come to stay) are still in thrall to cultures in which manual labor is regarded as an affront to masculine dignity; many of them are of the opinion that the kibbutzniks, who voluntarily perform hard work in the stupefying heat of noonday, are insane—and who, having tried it, is to say they are wrong?

Nevertheless, come what may in the foreseeable future, the integrity of the kibbutz is likely to be respected. The kibbutzim may be in the red, but they are not luxuries: they serve two purposes admirably, defense and ideology. The settlements in the Beit Shean valley, south of the Sea of Galilee, take the brunt of the terrorist raids: a week does not pass that a children's dormitory is not shelled or a farmer wounded or killed when his tractor runs over a mine. In the north, on the Golan Heights, where the Syrians used to have their bunkers and artillery, paramilitary kibbutzim have been set up by soldiers of both sexes and by young foreign volunteers. (These dangerous frontier posts have never lacked for volunteers.) In addition, other new kibbutzim may be established in another strategic occupied area, the Etzion sector near Hebron; Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon, "speaking just for himself," as one learns to allow Israeli cabinet members to do, has gone so far as to urge a diplomatically questionable plan for a string of settlements along the whole length of the Jordan. It is certain that the Israelis are not going to budge until a peace treaty has been signed with the Arabs, but the prospects for this are poor, and the longer the occupation persists the more tempting and logical will seem the idea of setting up new kibbutzim, and the less radical will seem proposals like Allon's.

In the meantime, the café satirists like to make fun of the stock figure of the kibbutznik in sandals and "idiot's cap," wandering the streets of Tel Aviv bug-eyed on his day off. Still, there is more gratitude in their joking than contempt. Everyone knows that although the members of kibbutzim comprise only 3 per cent of the population, they took, on account of the inordinate number of kibbutzniks who are officers, 25 per cent of the casualties in the last war. In other respects, too, the methods of the collective movement and the activities of those either presently or formerly connected with it continue to exert enormous influence on tangible matters as well as on styles of thought and expression: indeed, it is impossible to begin to understand what makes the country run without first understanding this influence. Israeli society, comparatively open and comparatively democratic, has a "power elite"—or, if one prefers, an "aristocracy of merit"—topheavy with men associated with the kibbutzim. The nearly mythological David Ben-Gurion is living on a kibbutz in the desert (where he is engaged in writing a *History of the Jewish State*); his successor, present enemy, and former colleague, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, has origins in the collective movement going back forty years; and the two younger politicians who have the best chances of succeeding Eshkol —Moshe Dayan and Yigal Allon—both grew up on kibbutzim. On the other hand, Foreign Minister Abba Eban, the favorite of the galleries at the United Nations, is not given much chance of becoming Prime Minister: his background is scholarly, he delivers Hebrew with the same humane elegance that he does English, and consequently he seems to have the Israelis' awe but not their trust. They are sure that he would be an ornament to Israel, much as Adlai Stevenson would have been as President of the U.S., yet they suspect that under the circumstances the blunt manners of a kibbutznik like Dayan will serve the country better. (This attitude is also shared by Jews of non-European extraction: unpromising material for the kibbutz they may be, but their nationalism makes them Dayan's most fervid supporters.) Thus the importance of the kibbutz seems to be assured for the immediate future.

A RECENT BOOK by Hugh Nissenson, *Notes from the Frontier,** makes useful reading on the present state of the kibbutz, despite the fact that the "Notes" do not proceed in any systematic fashion and are not intended to come to any sociological conclusions. The "Notes" take the form of a diary kept by the author, an American journalist and short story writer, when he was working on a settlement in northern Galilee in the summer of 1965 and again at the time of the Six-Day War. With the exception of some egregious patches of unconvincingly laconic dialogue, Nissenson has succeeded in doing what he set out to do, that is, in combining alert reportage with a suggestive fictional style. In books of this kind a good eye for the significant detail is decisive, and Nissenson's eye is almost always good. For example: kibbutzniks adore their machinery, they go down to their tractors in the mornings as if they were going o their brides; in several swift descriptions, the most striking of which is of a boy caressing the muddy wheels of a tractor, Nissenson captures this relationship. Elsewhere, dealing with the phenomenon of kibbutz sobriety, which is immune to conscientiously organized moments of celebration like the secular bar-mitzvah, Nissenson writes, ". . . almost all the wine bottles on the tables are still more than half full. Everyone has been drinking orange soda." When he does use second-hand material, stories which the kibbutzniks tell him, Nissenson is able to relate it to the evidence he has gathered firsthand. The aversion to alcohol, then, is joined to a strict morality whose sanctions are rigorously enforced on the rare occasions when they need to be. A kibbutznik tells Nissenson the story of the scandal that upset the settlement several years before: a *chaver*, a comrade, came home and found his wife in

* Dial, 215 pp., $4.50. See also *Kibbutz: Venture in Utopia*, by Melford Spiro (Schocken, 1963), and the relevant chapters in *Israeli Society* by S. N. Eisenstadt (Basic Books, 1967), and in *The End of the Jewish People?* by Georges Friedmann (Doubleday, 1967).

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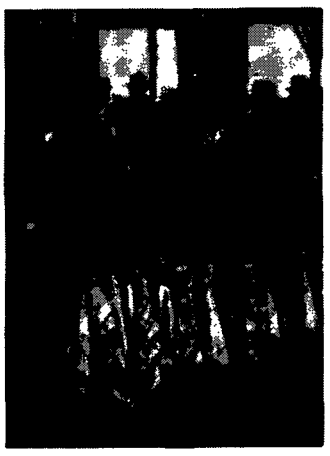

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bed with a friend, also married and with children; there was an uproar, public debate, and a vote, and finally both couples, with their children, were expelled.

THE conditions of life in such a place are revealed as the details accumulate and although he accepts them as cheerfully as he can, it is clear that the conditions are much harsher than what a middle-class American like Nissenson is used to. The hardships are physical as well as psychological. Since kibbutzim try to be self-sufficient, their food is liable to be limited and monotonous (the universal *melaffefonim*—cucumbers—until the Crack of Doom). As in Nissenson's kibbutz, one eats this stuff in a communal dining-hall ringing with the shouts of children and the clash of kitchenware. The women move up and down the aisles, pushing their serving carts and wearing expressions of ennui. Their faces are free of makeup; "the heat," Nissenson observes, "has dried out their skin and given them premature wrinkles around the eyes and at the corners of their mouths."

Hard Work is the main feature, the religious rite, Nissenson implies, of the atheistic kibbutz. He is assigned to the cotton fields, and suffers there from the insects, the dust, and the heat. "The gusts of hot, dry wind again seem to be blowing from the sun itself, as if it were breathing on the earth." By nightfall he is "sodden and exhausted," his hands "blistered and swollen, the little fingers slashed from the tough stems of the weeds." At the same time, by way of compensation, he notices his senses becoming unusually keen: "This morning, at exactly five to four, an invisible sparrow in the silver ash behind our bungalow, joined a minute later by hundreds of swallows, crested larks, and something in the myrtle bush beside the path that makes a metallic squeak like a gardener's shears trimming a hedge." Fitfully, Nissenson even experiences happiness in being close to the land; this is a sensation whose high moral value he is aware of, but he is honest enough to admit that it takes hold of him much less often than simple tiredness and boredom. Stern, the boss of the cotton fields, tells him that this fugitive sense of "participating in the creation" is the chief reason why he, Stern, has remained on the kibbutz for ten years, why he has forced himself to overcome many moments of doubt.

> When they first came here . . . Stern and his wife lived near the cow-shed in a canvas tent with a raised wooden floor. The rough planks under his bare feet as he climbed into his cot made him happy. At home, his room had been carpeted, but he had never bothered to feel its texture or notice its design. Here, the grain in the wood idly examined one night filled him with joy. At other times, a patch of the pale-blue sky, a handful of the arid red earth sifted through his fingers, or a burr from a camel-thorn gave him the same sensation. It was a delight in the natural world that he had never experienced in Johannesburg.

FULLY, PAINFULLY engaged in their situation, Nissenson questions the kibbutzniks: What has brought them here, what keeps them? Their reasons turn out to be nearly as varied as their origins: Sabra, German, South African, English, American. One reason that goes conspicuously uninvoked is the old Zionist argument about proving that Jews can become farmers; by now, apparently, it is agreed that they can. For some, a certain Marxist ideology is still important: "I live here because on a kibbutz, exploitation is impossible." Others, without making a fuss over it, are skeptical about the "objective truth" of Marxism: "One doesn't believe something because it's true, but because it's good." In general the foreign-born are more concerned than the Sabras with examining their motives, and among the foreign-born those from English-speaking countries tend to waver more than do, say, the German refugees. Almost everyone who explains himself to Nissenson does so in idiosyncratic terms whose furthest extension is to the kibbutz community rather than to the whole State of Israel. There is a strong element of provincialism in this, of mistrust of the city and bewilderment with social change. The menace of the idle teeny-bopper on Tel Aviv's Dizengoff Street does not seem less pernicious than the direct threat of the Arabs.

Curiously, despite its great influence on the country, the kibbutz is folded in on itself. For its members, the sense of nationality which is felt constantly by their countrymen is tempered—except in time of hot war—by other loyalties. Guarding the kibbutz from infiltrators, for example, is an ordinary job done to keep the community secure; it does not present itself, in any immediate way, as an act of protecting the country, although many kibbutzim are so located that the effect is precisely that. This is puzzling to an outsider. One can understand, perhaps, how the members of a kibbutz which is located away from the frontier might be able to subsist on community feeling. But Nissenson's kibbutz was right under the Syrian guns; in such a case it is hard to understand how the kibbutzniks endured without the comfort of knowing they were doing a patriotic service. The few who gave up and left did so on account of the food! It is not clear whether Nissenson is aware of this mystery; certainly he never addresses himself to explaining it. He is satisfied to show that the punishment and psychological pressure under which the kibbutzniks lived took their toll, even on those who appear to have made a satisfactory adjustment.

Off and on for twenty years the Syrians, invulnerable to retaliation except by aircraft, fired down on the settlements in the Huleh Valley, planted mines in the fields at night, even—it always sounds too grotesque to credit—kidnapped and murdered children. At Nissenson's kibbutz a teen-aged girl became disturbed, refused to change her clothes or wash, and had nightmares in which she was raped and mutilated by Arabs. The girl's mother, herself a survivor of a concentration camp, would not allow her to be taken for psychotherapy to Haifa; according to her, the girl was "just going through a phase." This girl had been damaged to such a degree that she could no longer be a functioning member of the kibbutz, indeed was turning into a bad example and a liability.

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But were those who reacted in the opposite way, courageously, sarcastic about the dangers, not also victimized, though in a subtler fashion? What of the men who have lived so long with blood, pistols, and rifles, that they have become nihilistically at ease in their presence, if not, in the worst of cases, actually sadistic? Nissenson quotes the introspective schoolteacher who is unable to overcome his repugnance for weapons: "Once we had denied God and decided to acquire power to redeem ourselves we were destined to become like everyone else. Murderers . . . ."

Surely this must seem exaggerated to Americans, with our peculiar mixture of safe distance from wars and coarsened moral sensibility. Yet the schoolteacher must be understood: aggression and self-defense, means and ends, can be separated in theory; in practice they become inextricably confused. It does not change matters very much to protest, with excellent reason, that this revolt against God, this taking up of arms, was something that was forced on the Jews against their will. The events of the last decades, both the catastrophe in Europe and the rebirth of a Jewish state in Palestine, have put an end to a certain tradition of coming to terms with the world. That tradition should not be forgotten, and what parts of it were honorable should be honored. But one suspects that a larger portion of one's attention deserves to be turned to the traps and opportunities thrown open by the start of a new—and, one should not delude oneself, *irreversible*—stage of history. Almost all that is certain is that there is no going back; as for the future, things are profoundly unsettled in Israel as they are in the other two important Jewish communities that remain, the American and the Russian. The Israeli experience seems to be the crucial one because the Israelis are grappling most directly, and dangerously, with the facts of the post-Auschwitz age. It is ironic that in doing so they are still running the risks of abnormality and tension whose resolution was supposed to have attended the establishment of a Jewish state. One would do well to re-

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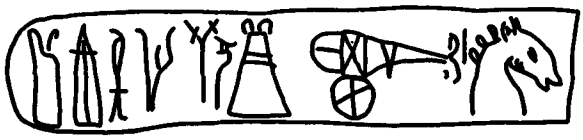

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member, however, that the situation of the Jewish state since it was established has been in fact abnormal and at odds with the premises of the early Zionist writers. Herzl, for instance, did not foresee a state surrounded by hostile neighbors, forced to maintain itself on perpetual alert. On the contrary, his vision in *Altneuland* was of a Jewish people at peace, devoting its talents to scholarship, science, and trade, and to the rejuvenation of the Fertile Crescent in cooperation with the neighboring peoples. So far the Israelis' desire for peace and for this kind of cooperation has been thwarted. Those observers who are alarmed by the militancy of the Israelis and compare it unfavorably with an earlier tradition in which spiritual values were supposedly accorded a larger place, might hesitate before passing such heavy judgment and consider what things have been resolved, what are still in flux, and what are outside the power of men of good will to determine.

THE SECTION of Nissenson's diary having to do with his stay in 1965 ends with a long entry describing an incident in which an American-born kibbutznik is wounded: his tractor runs over a mine and in order to save him the doctors must amputate his leg. When Nissenson comes back in June 1967, a primary fact of life for this kibbutz is in the process of being reversed. While the women and children live in shelters, the Israeli army takes the Golan Heights from the Syrians. At first the kibbutzniks are more stunned by the death of several members in the fighting than by the lifting of the twenty-year siege. Nissenson suggests, however, that life is now going to be somewhat more bearable. (In fact, there has not been a single incident in that part of the Huleh Valley since.) He is right to emphasize that the sense of claustrophobia is already not weighing so desperately; anyone who knew Israel in the years before the war can remark this change in daily life—even the bus queues in Tel Aviv seem to have gotten a little less dog-eat-dog. By noting this Nissenson goes a long way toward keeping his book from being obsolete.

At a high cost to the Arab states and also to themselves the Israelis have got some breathing space. Their frontiers have been shortened and moved a few dozen miles away from the centers of population. In the resulting relaxation, the activity and optimism, the increased contact—often wary, sometimes friendly—with the Palestinian Arabs, one begins to sense what a fine thing it would be if peace broke out. In this part of the world "normalization" would take on the dimensions of a spiritual, not a mundane, event.

Television and Reality

Neil Compton

"TELEVISION *as* Reality" might almost have been a better title for this article. The last five horrific years have clearly demonstrated, if demonstration was necessary, that television is no longer a secondary and contingent factor in American life, but part of the very fabric of corporate existence. That the TV versions of some major events have come to seem more authentic than the unmediated occurrences themselves is due, not merely to repetition and ubiquity, but also to the awesome credibility of whatever is transmitted by that unblinking and apparently dispassionate electronic eye. Yet common sense is surely right (whatever philosophers or communications theorists may say) to urge us to be worried about the distortion of reality (or our sense of it) that results from the unavoidable selectivity of the medium. Nowadays, complaints tend to center around television's evident preoccupation with violence, and its "white, racist bias." Opinions may and do differ about the significance and justice of these charges, but not even Marshall McLuhan (I like to think) would dismiss them as totally irrelevant.

Even if public indignation and ritualistic self-incrimination by television executives and producers did not invite comment, a review of the past few months could hardly avoid trying to come to grips with this subject. The triumphs of Eugene McCarthy, the Têt offensive, the decision of the President not to seek re-election, the death and burial of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, and the eruption into riot of scores of American cities were all phenomena which either could not have happened at all before the video age, or would have happened in a very different way. To have ignored all this in favor of such interesting but less urgent topics as the motherless family in serial drama and situation comedy, or the clash of cultures in *Celebrity Billiards*, would have been easier than trying to come to grips with what I suspect are insoluble problems. Nonetheless, it would have been a dereliction of duty.

Does American television deliberately and cynically exploit violence for profit? The charge has been frequently made, and seems to be striking home, because all the networks have recently made pious resolutions to change their ways. (Whether any real reformation will take place may be doubted.) Being an old-fashioned, rather bourgeois soul, I find the cult of violence in contemporary culture (whether high or low) both repellent and boring, and I have minimal respect for the intelligence and good faith of those who control commercial television. Nevertheless, I think they deserve to be defended against this particular charge.

The fact is that violence in popular art is nothing new. The Scottish border ballads, much of the Elizabethan drama, Smollett's novels, and Gothick horror tales, all in their different ways testify to this enduring human fascination. In the 20th century, the United States media certainly have no monopoly in this field: no American series ever exploited death and torture with such kinky and inhuman stylishness as *The Avengers*, made in Britain. Oddly enough, the admirers of Steed and Mrs. Peel include many who would be the first to complain of sadism in such American series as *The*

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Untouchables or *Wild, Wild West.* Of course, *The Avengers* is viewed by these sophisticates as an elegant send-up. Perhaps they believe that, to paraphrase Burke, violence itself loses half its evil by losing all its grossness.

H. Rap Brown struck to the heart of the matter in his notorious remark (made on camera) that "Violence is as American as cherry pie." The point is that there is nothing specifically American about cherry pie, though the U.S. probably leads the world in the production and consumption of this delicacy. So with violence. American culture has no monopoly in the sanction of domestic (not to mention international) aggressiveness, but it also has no serious rival among the advanced nations of the world. In a country which is engaged in a savage and highly visible war and where some sixty-five hundred citizens were murdered last year, it is asking too much to expect that popular art should be irradiated with the values of brotherhood, sweetness, and light. One can sympathize with the motives that prompt Dr. Frederic Wertham's crusade against media violence, and share his dismay at the findings of a survey which showed that in one week on the television channels of a large American city, there were 7,887 acts and 1,087 threats of violence, without agreeing with him that to attack these symptoms is the best way to cure the communal disease. In any case, the most casual and fragmented (and therefore the most obscene) images of violence are to be found these days on the news shows, and one assumes that Dr. Wertham is not trying to clean *them* up.

If they prove anything, these horrific statistics indicate that the cult of violence is based upon something far more serious than the desire of a few cynical men to get rich by pandering to base appetites. Video mayhem on that scale could not be the product of rational calculation. Something much more sinister and atavistic must be involved. The tragic truth seems to be that the greatest popular myth of 20th-century America has become not merely irrelevant (in which case it would cease to be

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popular and fade away) but lethal and neurotic. The Western and its urban counterpart, the crime thriller, incarnate virtually all the most dangerous tendencies of man in 20th-century mass society: contempt for legal authority or due process, the glorification of alienation, the resort to individual violence, and racist attitudes toward Indians, Mexicans, or urban minority groups. If it were practical, there might be something to be said for banning these genres from the television screen.

Since it is not practical, and since getting rid of the programs would not get rid of the public attitudes to which they appeal, the enlightened solution is to use the myth creatively in the service of a less antisocial vision. This, I take it, was the fumbling and half-conscious intention of a movie which has been quite savagely attacked for its exploitation of violence, *Bonnie and Clyde*. This picture beautifully combined a nostalgic, pastoral evocation of smalltown life in the South and Midwest during the 30's with a realistic emphasis upon its physical and emotional poverty. It explained why this environment produced minor desperadoes like Clyde Barrow and why they became heroic figures to many an ostensibly respectable American. Though the audience was encouraged to identify with the almost innocent euphoria of Bonnie and Clyde at the start of their criminal career ("We rob banks!"), the sinister consequences of their violence, both for their victims and themselves, is made increasingly explicit until its climax in the gruesome ambush which ends their lives and the picture. Our ambiguous feelings about the protagonists seem to me to be exactly appropriate to the dramatic situation. Was it luck or genius that inspired the choice of a story with this particular setting in space and time? Bonnie and Clyde are heirs to the territory and much of the glamorous tradition of the Western outlaw, but their lifestyle and their technological sophistication resemble those of the urban gangster; at the same time, they are not, like the cowboy, cut off from us by temporal remoteness or, like the mob leader, by penthouse affluence. Hence, the astonishing mythic force of the picture. Of course, since this is a commercial product of the Hollywood studios, *Bonnie and Clyde* does not consistently maintain its own highest standards: in particular the theme of Clyde's impotence is handled with all the subtlety and insight of a sophomore psychologist.

To Dr. Wertham, of course, *Bonnie and Clyde* is no more than the sum total of its violent episodes, but I hope that I have indicated some of the ways in which the film provides a model that television producers might emulate—if only they were allowed to think in terms of worthier aims than a top-ten rating. In any case, the statistical approach to media violence can be very misleading: how can we compare the enemies of CONTROL dying like flies at the end of a *Get Smart* episode with a single savage beating in (say) *Gunsmoke*, the camera up close from below and focused on the sadistic twitch at the corners of the assailant's mouth? It is well known that a violent argument between husband and wife in a domestic drama can be more disturbing to juvenile viewers than half a dozen shootings in a typical Western which, though exciting, does not dramatize a situation with which they closely identify.

THAT THIS generalization applies to adults as well as to children is suggested by the fact that the most disturbing programs dealing with the racial conflicts of the past few months have not been those which showed cities burning, police and rioters battling, or even the distended bellies of starving Southern children—dreadful though these spectacles were. The greatest and most salutary shocks to white complacency and self-confidence were applied by purely verbal confrontations between leaders of the black and white communities. One of these was staged during the inaugural program of the Public Broadcasting Laboratory, but I was not able to see it. However, I was an astonished witness of "Civil Rights—What Next?" (NET, April. Producer: R. D. Squier) in which three angry blacks in a New York studio overwhelmed three rather feeble and inadequate whites in Washington with an eloquent torrent of argument and invective. While Floyd McKissick of CORE, James Foreman of SNCC, and Hosea Williams of SCLC kept pouring it on, the unfortunate Washingtonians seemed incapable of reply. They tried to talk against the flow of verbiage, but had trouble concentrating while the sound from New York kept dinning into their earpieces at a volume quite loud enough to be audible to viewers. In desperation, audio from New York was cut off for a few minutes to give the whites a chance to blurt out a few lame words. Then back to New York where it became immediately apparent that the black rhetoric had continued unabated all through this little hiatus.

At the end, the hapless moderator concluded that "to expose racial problems in this country is to exacerbate them." One saw what he meant, even while disagreeing.

Since NET programs have only recently become visible in Montreal, and this was one of the earliest I was able to see, I at first attributed the lack of control over this debate to a low budget and inadequate technical facilities. However, something rather similar happened on a commercial network program, "Newark—the Anatomy of a Riot" (ABC, July. Producer: Ernest Pendrell), in the series *Time for Americans*. Here a number of citizens, black and white, demonstrated that Newark is a long way from either agreeing on the causes of last year's outbreak or taking the kind of action that will prevent a recurrence. The babble of bitter talk between white merchants and black community leaders made it painfully clear that what one participant called the "tragic dance" of hate and suspicion will not soon be ended in Newark. Other programs in the same six-part series were equally depressing: "Bias and the Mass Media" featured two hour-long discussions. On the first, Harry Belafonte, Lena Horne, Larry Neal, and Dr. Alvin Poussaint delivered a choric denunciation of white-owned media, concluding that they "will not permit the people to understand." There was such unanimity and so little direction or

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discipline to the discussion that the program became boring. So did its successor the following week, though for different reasons. Here, the impassioned common sense of Norman Cousins of the *Saturday Review* and Edward P. Morgan of NET shone fitfully amidst the ponderous evasiveness of a gaggle of top media brass.

"Prejudice and the Police" was at once more dramatic and more sinister. This program confronted nine members of the Houston police force with an equal number of citizens, mostly black or Mexican. It was one of a number of similar group sessions organized by the city to enable police and public to engage in face-to-face discussion. The chief obstacle to dialogue was the truculent defensiveness of the police. To a man, they refused to admit that there was substance to complaints of violence and lack of respect put forward, with great moderation and charity, by the colored citizens. Only the example of the endlessly patient group leaders added an element of hope to this ugly little vignette of life in Texas. With their admirably American faith in the sure triumph of reason and goodwill if people can be made to level with each other, they carried on with discussion, psychodrama, and role reversal as though oblivious to the policemen's sullen self-righteousness.

Whatever may happen on the city streets, this is certainly proving to be a long hot summer for this kind of confrontation on television. As though responding to the urging of some unseen prompter, all the networks have scheduled a total of about two dozen specials devoted wholly or in part to the racial crisis. Cynics may observe that summer is a period of low ratings and panel shows are cheap to produce; optimists might retort that prime time is prime time, and low budgets may have unintended advantages. The underproduced rawness and untidiness of human relations on the programs I have been describing is much closer to the reality of black-white interaction than a more disciplined format would suggest.

But even this kind of program involves its own characteristic form of distortion. Black audiences may watch (if they do) for the pleasure of seeing the white establishment being outtalked or unmasked, but they do not learn anything about their situation that they did not know before. It is the white audience that is being enlightened and informed. Blackness is not taken for granted as part of the kaleidoscopic variety of American life, but exposed as a problem, a threat to the status quo. In other words, these well-intentioned and wholly admirable programs cannot avoid defining normality (and hence, by extension, "reality") in terms of whiteness.

SO FAR AS the media are concerned, there are two possible cures for this intolerable social disease. Both are being tried this year, in timid, experimental doses, though they are ultimately incompatible with one another. Either of them, if seriously attempted, would involve a more radical reform of current practice than anything now being dreamed of at NBC or CBS.

The first alternative is to make darkness visible throughout the media. I well remember my surprise at the racial variety in the streets of New York, upon my first visit three years ago: Hollywood's version of American reality tended to suppress that little detail. Things have improved somewhat since then, and there are apparently plans afoot to enrich the racial mix on both programs and commercials this autumn. However, there are limits to what can be accomplished along these lines. So long as Bill Cosby cannot lay a hand on a white chick in *I Spy*, his visibility tends to emphasize his inferior status. Furthermore, television's view of life tends to be not merely lilywhite, but even more fervently bourgeois. One can imagine network executives coming to accept a kind of *café-au-lait* consciousness, but not the matriarchal, proletarian values of the great black ghettos.

A more promising alternative would be to establish black-owned and operated outlets in large cities. This is a project that might interest the Ford Foundation, which has shown a willingness to

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support relatively radical experiments in the field of public communications. However, it is doubtful whether the Foundation would be prepared to tolerate the inevitably heterodox political, social, and sexual orientation of such stations. Local white communities would presumably be even less sympathetic. Yet this kind of facility is a necessity for any minority which wishes to maintain its identity in the modern world.

In the meantime, a few small experiments in programming by and for black people are under way. National Educational Television leads the way with two regular series. *History of the Negro People* is a series of half-hour programs devoted to uncovering the heritage, African and American, of black culture; and *Black Journal* (editor: Louis Potter) is a moderately lively hour-long weekly magazine-type show which seems to be hitting its stride after an understandably shaky start.

Of Black America (CBS), a rather lavish series of documentaries and panel discussions, was not produced by or exclusively for black viewers but it has managed so far to avoid acquiring too whitish an aura. The first program, "Black History: Lost, Strayed, or Stolen" (Producers: Andrew Rooney and Perry Wolf), narrated by Bill Cosby, was a masterpiece of research, editing, and cool, hip commentary. The use of old and new film clips to illustrate prejudice and stereotypes was both hilarious and appalling. "The Black Soldier" (Producer: Peter Poor), though limited by its thirty-minute format, used old drawings and still photos very effectively, the camera zooming in to single out the "invisible" black faces among the armies of a dozen American wars. Other programs in the series (not yet over) have not been quite so successful. Nevertheless, *Of Black America* at its best demonstrates what superlative resources of intelligence, public spirit, and style CBS News can marshal when it wants to and is given the chance. What a pity the parent organization displays so few of the same qualities. But then intelligence, public spirit, and style have limited value to a business whose main purpose is to sell soap, cars, and cheese.

BEFORE ending this discussion of television and reality, I must at least mention a program that has little directly to do with either violence or blackness, but a lot to do with reality and its complications. *Will the Real Norman Mailer Please Stand Up?* (NET. Producer-director: Dick Fontaine) is a tour-de-force of *cinéma vérité* which covers the same sequence of events (private and public) as *The Armies of the Night*. Certainly that book and this program illustrate the truth of my opening generalities about the mythopoeic function of media. Don't miss it if it turns up again.

Return of the Repressed

John Thompson

JAMES GOULD COZZENS's new novel, *Morning Noon and Night*,* is the first he has published since 1957, when *By Love Possessed* became the runaway best-seller of all the Eisenhower years. Since the new book continues and extends, as if in a sequel, many of the mannerisms and attitudes of that earlier work and seems to have at least the ambition of being as representative of the present time as that book was taken to be of its own, it may be worthwhile to look back before considering the new one.

By Love Possessed was not only the most popular book of its era but seemed to many reviewers also the literary masterpiece of that time. Nor were these only the middlebrow reviewers; the book was praised in little magazines as well as in the New York *Times*. It won the Howells Medal of the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1960, an award given every five years for that period's most distinguished work of American fiction, and the awards of the Academy, while certainly made by an Establishment, are no erratic ornaments of the book industry like the Pulitzer prizes arranged by the trustees of Columbia University. They represent the opinions of some of our best writers.

By Love Possessed seemed to validate the high opinion of itself that the American middle class attained in those Eisenhower years, an opinion supported, or largely acceded to, by most American intellectuals. The representative novels of those years were what Dwight Macdonald called "the Novel of Resignation"—John P. Marquand, Sloan Wilson, Herman Wouk—"in which the highest reach of enlightenment is to realize how awful the System is and yet to accept it *on its own terms*." With the radical movement still demoralized by Stalinism; with the opposition to Stalinism made into a vicious joke by Joe McCarthy; with the real threat of Communism alive both in Eastern Europe and in Asia; and with the obvious power and material success of American capitalism during and after World War II; with all this, both the old radicals and the then so-famously-apathetic young seemed as resigned as the middle-class heroes of these novels to accepting the System, on its own terms. Even in purely literary matters, the period was conservative. The "modern" movement was over, and nothing had arrived to take its place but academic redactions of it. *By Love Possessed*, heavy, ambitious, and successful, seemed to provide the American ruling classes with something close to their own *Aeneid*, at least until Dwight Macdonald made his examination of it in COMMENTARY.†

Macdonald's most effective point against the book was not his analysis of its theme, his classification of it with the Novels of Resignation; nor was it his frank notice of its ungenerous anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, and anti-Negro attitudes; not even his attack on the author's ignorance of the real nature of his hero, a bore and a prig; what hurt was his analysis of the author's rhetoric. By quotation, Macdonald

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JOHN THOMPSON's The Talking Girl and Other Poems *has just been published by Pym-Randall Press. Mr. Thompson appraises current fiction regularly in the pages of* COMMENTARY.

* Harcourt, Brace & World, 408 pp., $5.95.

† "By Cozzens Possessed," January 1958.

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made it apparent that this language, praised so much by reviewers, was affected, overblown, frequently clumsy in construction, far from any idiom of actual human speech, and loaded with grotesque redundancies and gratuitous ornaments. I would guess that now, ten years later, Macdonald's attack on *By Love Possessed* is better remembered than the novel. For the young, it is enough to name Cozzens to suggest how blasted are all the hopes of the conservatives for intellectual respectability.

To read *By Love Possessed* again, ten years later, is to wonder indeed how so many people managed so much immediate sympathy for its hero, Arthur Winner, the good, innocent, suffering, rich, hardworking, small-town lawyer, with his temptations of the flesh, his interminable legal and moral quibbles, his interminable besettings by the lower orders and by hysterical females, which he manfully resolves one after the other with his priggish —yes, unbearably priggish—self-righteousness and social arrogance. It is even more this tone of the hero's than it is the assumptions that underlie it which seems odd now. He would appear to be a man set up for destruction, and yet, in 1957, he is not destroyed. He seems headed for a fall exactly because he is so efficient, so ready with his precedents and his facts, so terribly right—exactly because he rouses for us, against our wills, I should say, against our better judgment, the kind of archaic pleasure that wells up within us, or within those of us of the simpler sort, when we see even the most blatant virtue triumphing over sordid evil—as at the appearance of the Cheeryable Brothers, or of Athena before the Furies, or of the officer who at the last moment arrives to confound Tartuffe by announcing, *Nous vivons sous un Prince ennemi de la fraude.* We are not expected to believe, in *By Love Possessed,* that we do live under a good Prince, or that Arthur Winner believes this, but rather that he, in his innocence, is a reasonable facsimile of such a Prince. And so, our own innocent part of us that loves stories thus loves also these triumphs of virtue, even Arthur Winner's. Yet we cannot quite take it for real; it is impossible to believe that Arthur Winner is not being set up for disaster—and there is none. There is only a kind of enlightenment for him, no reversal at all.

Winner's enlightenment is supposed to occur when, at the end of the book, he acquiesces in the wisdom of his older partner, Julius Penrose, and together they protect their senior partner in law, old Noah Tuttle, from the exposure of his lifelong embezzlements. These embezzlements were benign in purpose—he juggled his trust accounts trying to recover losses to his clients incurred through no fault of his—but clearly illegal. Noah, after all, although the point is not made, is only manipulating credit as any banker does, except that the law does not allow him this arrogation. Arthur Winner must also accept Julius Penrose's wisdom in remaining silent over the sinful mystery of the sexual transgression, a summer aberration, of Winner and Penrose's wife. The important thing is to keep up the facade. Neither sexual passion nor the necessary shortcuts and shady deals of responsible adults are to be admitted to real consideration in the business of life.

The world, the small world of the small town, Brocton, with its rich, its poor, its law-courts, its churches, its whole social order, is to be maintained without question. The illumination, then, doesn't really bring much additional light. It is the kind of switching-on of a rather dim bulb common enough at the end of short stories; not much for a long novel. What Arthur Winner has been doing all along, he is now brought to recognize, but quite without any reason for it, and certainly not in public. He finds it good, and he goes on exactly as before, superior, still lucky, outwardly complacent, assured of the constant value of his place in the universe so long as he doesn't think about it.

So, except for the really incredible degree of the complacency, the total acceptance of the natural rights of the white well-born Anglo-Saxon, this attitude does seem to have been that of the Eisenhower years. Many of us old enough now to have been around in those years must remember how we were engaged in making do with jobs, with children, with tribulations of the flesh and of money. It was not a time when bold missions urged themselves, or when the old order had shown its failure, or when social ills were clearly epidemic. One made do and one stilled the unrest of feeling or of speculation. There were genuine external enemies before whom one by and large closed ranks, or allowed others to close them, all but unaware of one's own aggression; and there were, besides, wide open careers to be made; and there were, finally, the new perfection of the super-dry martini and everywhere the fat of the land. Of course there were also those who objected, those who did better. But for how many was all this not so? This was the decade in which one grew ten years older.

THE SECOND THING that is striking in reading again *By Love Possessed,* something also crucial to an understanding of *Morning Noon and Night,* is that there was more involved in that anomalous style than the mere awkward pretentiousness that Macdonald pilloried so neatly. Whether or not he succeeded, Cozzens really knew what he was trying to do. It was, I think, a bold endeavor, to pit rhetoric against the whole plain sense of his story, to use a baroque, outlandish, and even offensive style to try and give weight and complication to a tale he might with more consonance have told in the simple, craftsmanlike manner of some of his previous well-observed and well-ordered novels. (Certainly it was no attempt to exploit the sexual scenes, although these floridly and ironically anatomical set-pieces undoubtedly helped to attract attention in those innocent days.) Cozzens describes the style himself, quite accurately, in writing of the way Julius Penrose talks in the book. "In his harsh clear voice, disdainfully made a little mincing, as though Julius intended it to mock its own grating sound, he called. . . ." And again: "The well-known habit of the finished phrases, in their level precision almost rehearsed-sounding, the familiar, deliberately mincing tones that mocked themselves with their

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own affectation, that mocked, too, Arthur Winner. . . ."

Except for the "clear," for the "level precision," which Cozzens does not always manage, these are good descriptions of his style and of the attitude it attempts to convey. "Grating," "mincing"—maybe by some trick of unconscious memory, I had jotted down these very words for the style and manner of *Morning Noon and Night* before I had gone back to the earlier book. Why this strange tone, at once grating (harsh, querulous, complaining, peevish), and mincing (affectedly dainty and elegant)? Well, for the reasons the author gives, basically: words "that mocked themselves with their own affectation, that mocked, too, Arthur Winner. . . ." It resembles perhaps a mock-epic style, in which insignificant acts—the cutting of a lock of hair—are described with the rhetoric and machinery normally reserved for imperial themes, and the result is comic. But Cozzens's view of his story could not withstand the comic—as Macdonald said, the essence of it is farce—and so he employed a baroque irony, a kind of insurance or hedging that now inflates, now deflates, and avoids the responsibility of ever saying just what scale these figures should have: "deliberately mincing tones that mocked themselves with their own affectation, that mocked, too, Arthur Winner"—and, as Cozzens went on to say, "but without unkindness, without a wish or a will to hurt—let us consider together human passion and folly; let us smile together!" Claiming, denying; proposing and withdrawing: this kind of style well presents the dilemma of a mind that must say at once that something is dreadfully wrong and yet everything must be made to seem all right. Its grating prejudices and condescensions together with its obsequious complacencies are wrapped in this irony almost beyond the reach of consideration. Let us smile together, for we are still in charge and have not yet been found out except by one another. Thus ends Arthur Winner in 1957, bravely carrying the burdens of his duty to remain among the rulers of his small town.

In 1968, like his creator some ten years older than Arthur Winner was in the Eisenhower days, a narrator called Henry Dodd Worthington presents his memoirs. The title, *Morning Noon and Night*, refers primarily to the fact that the book's hero is reciting the story of his life, musing over his childhood, manhood, and, at his sixty-odd years of age, his sense of forthcoming death. But that title soon acquires, as these memoirs proceed, that sense in which we use the phrase to characterize some unrelenting tedium like nagging.

Part of the tedium of the book is summed up in that tiny problem of the title. Was the author being ironic about his own book? Probably, but only in this ambiguous way, and certainly not wholeheartedly. The memoirist says his work "may seem a laboring of the obvious," and indeed it often does; but how ironic is the author being here? How much are we to take the views of this memoirist for those of the author, how close does he wish us to see a relation between the real man and his hero, contemporaries and in some external events, anyway, travelers of parallel courses in life? Of course we cannot quote the thoughts of a fictional character as testaments against the author, like some Soviet prosecutor; but is the whole tone and burden of the book meant only to reveal the character of its hero in the harsh light of his own vainglorious literary posings? The uncertainty here becomes a tiresome puzzle, like the memoirist's own ironic accounts of the scanty and meaningless events of his life. In this book, the baroque irony of the style has none of the reason for being that it had in *By Love Possessed*. Here there is no attempt to smile over human passion and folly, to claim that all is, if not well, then as well as can be expected. Rather, disgust, guilt, and contempt drag themselves through these pages, leaving little behind but the grating sound of their slow passage.

It is impossible to be certain of the author's attitude, or of what attitude we are to take. The memoirist himself regards his life with protective scorn: "What a wonder that my fellow men can be kept from seeing me as the liar, sneak, coward, cheap bastard, and even monster that these selected memories certify I have on occasion shown myself to be; and so, strictly speaking, still am, or at any rate might (why not?) be again. Such scarifying musings," he goes on, "get me nowhere." Nor do they get the reader much of anywhere. Is this figure meant, like Arthur Winner, to be representative, or is he only another quite different figure—Arthur Winner's opposite, a portrait for the gallery, the dark side of all that Arthur Winner stood for? Does the author mean to give us here the return of everything that was repressed in the earlier book? Here smugness has none of the blind gentility of Arthur Winner's world. In the very first paragraph, he throws out his challenge.

> I have been young and now am old. Like the Psalmist long before me I find myself feeling on occasion that what I have to say about life deserves attention. We have, he and I, lived. We must have learned. This tells you, to start, why we ought to be, as well as heard, heeded. If the Psalmist, as he does, goes on to say he has not seen the righteous forsaken nor seed of theirs begging bread he means you to understand that what at his age he hasn't seen can't occur. By becoming old we have become wise, he and I, and you'd better believe the truth is in us.

Ambiguously qualified as it later is, that statement about who has to beg bread can only be taken, in 1968, as a deliberate affront. Later, during his service as a staff officer in World War II, the hero muses on grand strategy—unlike Arthur Winner, he is much concerned with world affairs, great matters of violence far outside his own comfortable surroundings.

> Might history be going to record that what we had hopelessly matched ourselves against was the single person among the day's national leaders not bogus, not the deviously arrived opportunistic trimming politician that a Roosevelt, a Churchill, a Stalin, a de Gaulle seen with inside knowledge had the alarming look of being; and who alone among them owned natural gifts amounting to some form of

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Napoleonic genius (however evil in our eyes)?

To record that he once praised Hitler may be a commendable indiscretion in a memoirist, but what kind of man are we asked to believe in here? I had better go on no longer about the ambiguities. My belief is that Cozzens has meant to give a portrait of a cold-hearted, conceited, ruthless man, whose acts and beliefs would grate most raspingly on the sensibilities of many readers; and he meant to indicate his great admiration for everything this man stands for. What he did not know, I believe, is how successfully the drawling, relentless irony, the infatuated "literary" posings, the half-ironic echoing, echoing, echoing everywhere of literary tags and mincing clichés, and the appalling series of other people's deaths and disasters reported as if with total indifference here and there among the long inconsequential musings and character sketches and casually vicious remarks—Cozzens could not have known how very well all this would represent the most miserable emptiness of Henry Dodd Worthington and the worthlessness of the little things he stands for.

Yet the book has a symptomatic relevance for 1968 much like that which *By Love Possessed* had for its year. Arthur Winner's solution, the solution of the Eisenhower years, the solution of suppression, of an achieved complacency, did not work. All that was repressed has returned. The hero of *Morning Noon and Night* enjoys more than anything what seem to be quite irrelevant obsessions with catastrophe. His first intellectual triumph, his first realization that he possessed the analytic abilities that led him to great success in his confessedly half-phony field of management consulting, occurred when as a boy he determined that had the lookout on the *Titanic* not seen the iceberg, had there not been that last-minute attempt to swerve which presented the entire flank of the ship to the ice, there would have been only a head-on collision which the boat could easily have survived. The climax of the book, the seemingly irrelevant and yet profoundly apposite and truly shocking climax, is another such reflection, almost joyous in its contemplation of a great disaster at sea. The hero reports on his analysis of the events of the Japanese surrender.

> It is a matter to me of some wonder that never generally realized seems to be what, with the dates set as they were, our Providence had then and there wrought for us. The gods who kept Japan were neither slumbering nor sleeping. The Divine Wind, Nippon's promised safeguard from time immemorial, was, it would prove, divinely timed, coming exactly as promised. How signal a mercy to us that the ruling Japanese were found men of little faith. Pusillanimous, overdoubtful of his divinity, the Son of Heaven lets the sacred *Afflatus* down. Cravenly despairing, fainthearted, his military leaders too soon, too soon throw in the sponge for him. Had Olympic come to be mounted as scheduled, the Okinawa typhoon of altogether unexampled fury would have caught our armada, designed with every care to be invincible, at sea, all its myriad immense flotillas spread out, square in the typhoon's path. That the greatest and probably most complete military catastrophe in the history of the world must have befallen us seems impossible to doubt.

Even thus relished in contemplation alone, such a grand visitation of death and destruction can serve to give meaning to a life otherwise empty. The denial and then the destruction of human feeling, the scorn for poor human efforts, the total assumption of insufficiently-praised superiority due to these denials of feeling—what could these produce in the end but a longing for catastrophe, an ecstasy in thinking of it, and the unspoken recognition that we are working very hard for its accomplishment?

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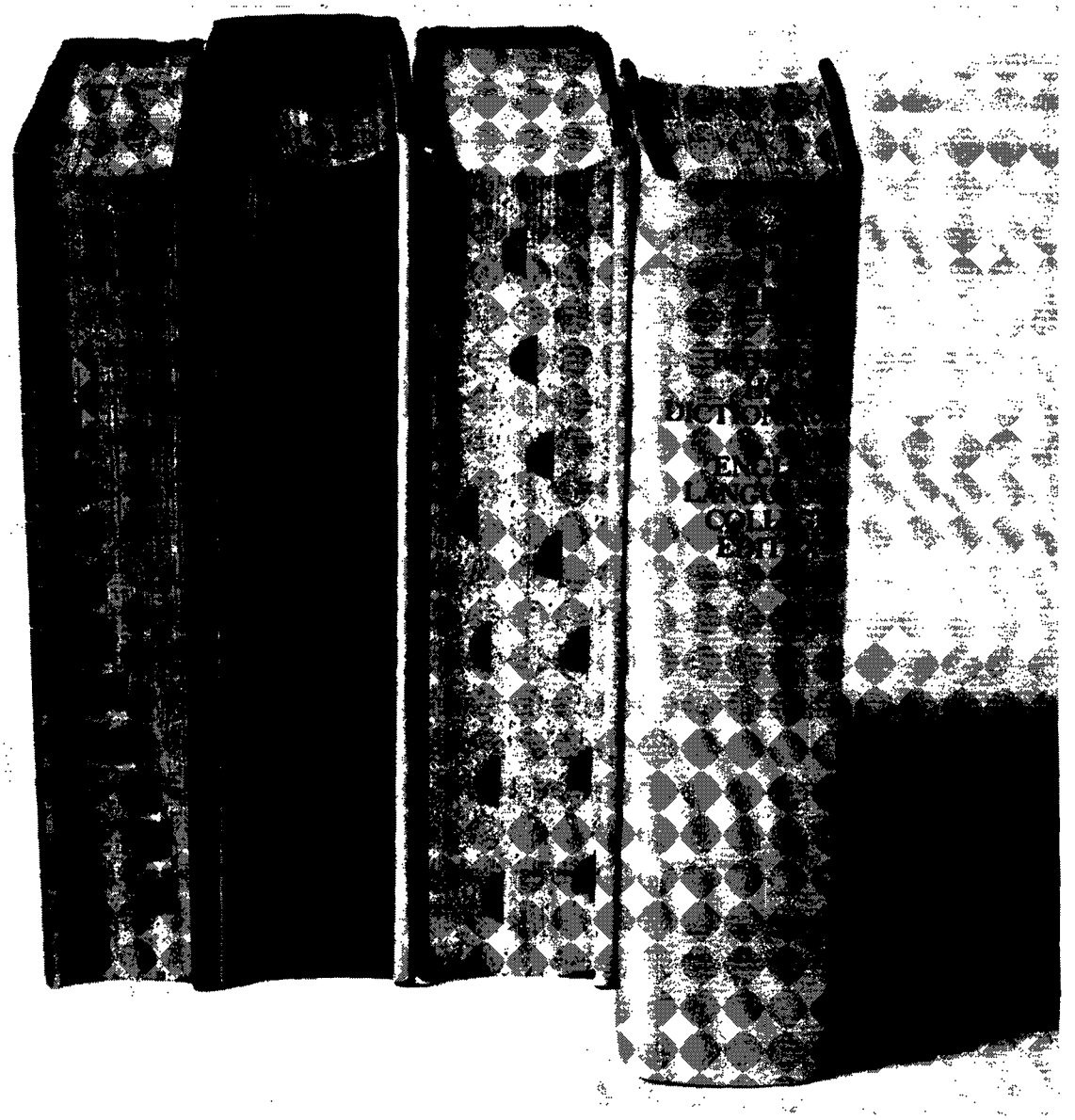

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The Last Word

THE PEASANT OF THE GARONNE. By JACQUES MARITAIN. *Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 288 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL NOVAK

IT WAS, I think, during my freshman year in college that I decided to read every word that Jacques Maritain had written. I was in a Roman Catholic seminary then, on the campus of a small liberal arts college. My imagination and mind were supercharged in those days: I can remember walking through the fields on the way to class in love, under the screaming blue sky, with God and His world. My heart sang in the way Maritain's prose sang. The earth—and the October-red maple tree alone in the meadow, where someone had affixed a crucifix—pointed to God; the earth was alive with analogies. What Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote was true: a plough makes even earth shine: cleaving exposes beauty. It was easy, then, to say, as Ivan Karamazov could not, "Yes" both to God and to creation.

Maritain blew my mind. I had been brought up in a conventional Catholic household, not Irish, however, but Slovak. There was in our home an affective warmth, a nondefensiveness about the faith, that I was later to miss in Irish parochial schools and parishes and seminary. (On St. Patrick's day, in order to take the special celebrations in good grace, I became "O'Novak;" in the sixth grade I learned to dance the Irish jig for Father Brady's anniversary skit. I remember winning the hundred-yard dash on "Irish day" at Kennywood Park in Pittsburgh, my pockets full of free tickets for the amusement rides provided by Father Hannon. Entering the "House of Horrors" I put my arm around blonde Elizabeth Flynn, wondering what Father Hannon would think; someone saw me, so I later found out.) On the other hand, the Catholic reading matter that came into our house was awful: *Our Sunday Visitor,* full of articles about making converts and the horrors of Communism; the *Register,* with its cartoons of dragons labeled "secularism" and its aversion to whatever Eleanor Roosevelt stood for.

Somehow, nonetheless, I had always had the conviction that Catholicism was radically at one with the true and the good. A great deal was wrong with contemporary Catholicism; I knew that from the way my mother and father talked (my mother went to high school, my father to the sixth grade; he got his high school diploma through home courses ten years ago). When I left for the seminary my father said: "Don't let them put you on a pedestal. Always remember you're still a man. Watch out for what they'll try to do to you." He also told me I'd never hear a lecture on the priest as servant to his people; he was right.

I entered the seminary, at the age of fourteen, with more than a touch of skepticism. I found many good things, and good people. I learned to pray, and learned a great deal, as well, about my own conceits and flights from truthfulness. But I also found a kind of death in the Church, a malaise, even a betrayal—now habitual rather than conscious—of basic Christian values. I made a distinction between true, real, lived Catholicism and typical Catholicism; people like Dorothy Day and Baroness von Hueck, whom I made a point of visiting when driving through New York on my way to college, represented the former and the vast majority the latter. I judged "the professionals," clergy and religious, on an especially taxing scale.

Maritain broke in upon my world just when I required a theory of the fundamental obligation of Catholicism to a more general truth and beauty and goodness, needed a lever against falsity and distortion and mediocrity. Moreover, although I was prepared to hate scholasticism and its empty rigors, I had the good fortune right from the beginning of having a teacher (Father Richard H. Sullivan, C.S.C., one of my "real" Christians) who took me, not to textbooks, but to primary sources. I discovered a way of reading Aquinas which armed me against much that passed for scholasticism, Thomism, or even Catholicism in our intellectual universe. Maritain gave me a way of relating my discoveries in the medieval world to the contemporary world: a theory of art, of politics, of social reform. "It is vain," he wrote, "to assert the dignity and vocation of human personality if we do not strive to transform the conditions that oppress man." Moreover, Maritain sang the praises of the human body. (I remember reading, concomitantly, a book called *My Friends, the Senses*). He was, long before the hippies, a devotee of contemplation. "Before being exploited by our industry to our use," Maritain had written in *True Humanism* (1936), the earth "demands . . . to be familiarized by our love." Earth, cornstalks dying under a silver moon, the caw of a crow, sweat, and human seed: God speaks in everything.

BECAUSE OF my promises of celibacy, I could not at that time seek the human love I very much desired for sharing these discoveries. My joy, however, was not diminished; it was heightened by the sense of doing what I wished to do, and at some cost, and by having to find other ways to express the affectivity I felt. Here, too, Maritain was of assistance. His poetic sensitivity, his own creative drive, but above all his renowned gentleness and openness to people served as a model at which, however re-

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motely, one might aim. The experience of reading, at nineteen, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* is one of the most intense and beautiful that I recall, even though now on perusing the book I am, disappointingly, unable to recapture the fervor of those days. Once and for all that book freed me from the tyranny of words; I recognized that there are many operations of intelligence besides those which are verbal, or as I was taught at Harvard, "cognitive." And I learned to search in writers for precisely those apperceptions which cannot be said and (as Wittgenstein later put it for me) must be shown.

Maritain also provided for me an intellectual path for moving from the political conservatism of my home town to liberalism—not, to be sure, the usual American liberalism of, say, Adlai Stevenson. The tradition Maritain articulated made the liberalism of John F. Kennedy resonate for me as it could not, quite, for the editors of *The New Republic*: a liberalism not of the Enlightenment but of more tortured ages, tutored by a sense of evil, absurdity, and tragedy, and unafraid of the compromises and complexities of power.

In today's terms, Maritain was more "New Left" than "liberal"; questions of value were prior, in his mind, to questions of function. Justice, he wrote in *The Range of Reason* (1952), "is not simply a table of technical adjustment and material improvement. It requires an idea of the dignity of the human person, and of the spiritual value of justice, freedom, and neighborly love." Moreover, Maritain had an attractive ability to assimilate: "I am glad to be Voltaire's debtor in the matter of civil tolerance, or Luther's in that of non-conformism, and for these things I honor them; they belong to my cultural universe."

I learned soon enough that secular intellectuals did not find in Maritain the liberation that I did; on the contrary, he was for many proof of the irremediable medievalism of Catholicism. (One remembers Morton V. White's typically condescending and ill-tempered review of Maritain's recent *Moral Philosophy.*) Even, it turned out, Catholic intellectuals in Europe disdained Maritain and his neo-Thomism; lionized in America, he was considered second-rate in France. The new directions were biblical studies, phenomenology, anything but scholasticism. Still, Maritain was for me, as I believe he must have been for very many others, the means of liberation, the poet and philosopher who taught us that "the seven centuries of laziness" must be ended and fresh intellectual strides taken. The Church is not what it is today, it is what it must be tomorrow: our loyalty is to the Church reformed. And, on the other hand, we cannot pretend to belong to a different Church than the Church of today: God speaks in this very moment, in the gnarled hands of the peasant saying his beads, despised by liberals, in front of tiers of flaming candles.

CONSEQUENTLY, I find myself reading Maritain's latest book, *The Peasant of the Garonne*, with nostalgia, with affection, and with gratitude. In it I see the route that I have traveled and I see that Maritain, who pointed, has not himself traversed the entire way. The book, even in the controversy it has stirred, is a testament to the immense progress made by Catholics in these last ten years. Maritain, who was once a leader, has fallen back. He shows us with long-suppressed bluntness (the bluntness of his early books on Bergson and *Three Reformers*, softened in middle age, has returned) what he cannot understand. And what good are giants, if we do not mount their shoulders and see what they did not?

Maritain calls this his last book and asks frequent pardon for his advanced age, for the pose of the blunt peasant, and for a magisterial and at times insufferably pretentious tone. Reading this book is like returning to one's father's house to find him less than himself. Too frequently, Maritain quotes from previous works, for as much as a page at a time. The last sections of the book are woven around long passages quoted from books, manuscripts, and letters of his departed wife. One feels immeasurable sadness in seeing a man betray,

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A dybbuk—
the surviving spirit of a murdered Yiddish music-hall comedian—taking over the body of an ex-Nazi *Hauptjudenfresser* storm trooper?

That, my friend, is real *hutzpah.*

Hans Helmut Schatz, former S.S. officer and officially de-Nazified police chief in the New Germany, is about to lose his job—and possibly his mind. For inside his neatly uniformed exterior, dancing a hora at awkward moments, lurks the laughing, mocking, maddening, loving spirit of Genghis Cohn . . . a Jewish comic whom Schatz "exterminated" a quarter of a century ago. (Under order, *aber natürlich.)*

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Beneath the farce (and this novel has been described as *"Faust* revised by the Marx Brothers"*) lies the question which haunts us all, German as well as Jew, American as well as Frenchman . . . *"Will it ever be possible to disentangle the Nazi from the Jew, the victim from the executioner, so deeply united in the very semen of the species? . . . Are the victim and the executioner really condemned to remain bound to each other for as long as there will be men?"*

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in the end, the vision and the vigor that had characterized his life.

For it is not that the task Maritain has undertaken is unimportant. Possibly, those who are not Christian, nor even believers in God, are in a position to see that task more clearly. (Atheists are today the guardians of Christian orthodoxy.) How many have not wondered whether modern Christians, in their enthusiasm for "relevance," are not simply evacuating traditional Christian themes of all significance? How many have not smelled the fishiness of many efforts to make Christianity conform to the standards, tastes, and needs of various influential sub-groups of the modern period, especially the intellectuals and the myth-makers? How many believe that behind the front of "reform and renewal" is hidden a profound loss of life, the advance of an unadmitted atheism, the larvae of *mauvaise foi*?

Maritain is offended by the "Christian tomfoolery" of the present day. He does not take back his past contributions to the effort at a genuine *aggiornamento*; again and again he notes the immensity of the task and the scarcity of laborers. Moreover, he gives brief, sharp analyses of what was ailing Roman Catholicism in the 19th and early 20th centuries: he still understands the laziness, the complacency, the hatred of the body, the error that this world is to be despised, the unsavory alliance of theological and socio-political conservatism, the immobility of imagination and conception, and, above all, the craving for security. His pages on integralism, on the failures of Thomism, on Jansenism, are as devastating as any he has ever written. He says plainly that his is still a heart which, by temper, "is of the Left," and that in the social and political bearing of the Church he is much more often with the Left than with the Right. He dates (and applauds) the sundering of the confusion between the interests of religion and those of a certain privileged social class, in which there thrived despite its religiosity a "comfortable practical atheism," with the founding of *Esprit* in Paris, in 1932, and of Dorothy Day's *Catholic Worker* (in New York) at nearly the same time.

After his dissection of integralism, Maritain sees that, "with a crash, the pendulum is swinging to the opposite extreme." Having suffered himself from integralist "methods, accusations, and denunciations," he hopes not to lose his head over the change, and not to yield "to the delicious and so 'consoling' pendulum movement which is sweeping along so many of my dear contemporaries."

Maritain has a passion for Truth (duly capitalized). In philosophy and in theology, he serves no other master. Moreover, he sees this Truth through a tradition of discourse that he discovered in Aquinas, not as though Aquinas had invented it alone, but as though it were a "living organism" built up by the labors during three thousand years of thousands of thinkers, known and unknown, which Aquinas "brought to a unity." Aquinas, Maritain thinks, established the model for any future intellectual *aggiornamento*; he established, as his medieval biographer puts it, "a new method, new reasons, new points of doctrine, a new order of questions." He saved the truths of the past; he entered into and wrested from controversy and confusion new truths from his erupting, creative environment.

Thomism is, in Maritain's view:

> an intelligible organism meant to keep on growing always, and to extend across the centuries its insatiable thirst for new prey. It is a doctrine *open* and without frontiers; open to every reality wherever it is and every truth from wherever it comes. . . .

Maritain can imagine Thomism seeking out other matrixes of inquiry "in other universes of thought formed under other heavens."

> I like to imagine all that could be brought to us by a Hindu who had become a Christian and a disciple of St. Thomas, and who would thoroughly know, with a kind of piety and filial connaturality, the Vedantic schools of thought and their particular ways of intellectual approach.

He imagines Thomism free of St. Thomas, too, "as he was in himself, and ready, like him, for the changes and remodelings required by a better view of things, and for the enlargings and deepenings demanded by an inquiry that is always going forward."

Maritain makes it abundantly plain that there are two unshakable experiences at the center of his moral life. One is his act of faith in the Church; the other is the ineffable experience, penetrating ever more deeply into his consciousness, and finally conceptualized as "the intuition of being." Concerning the Church, Maritain has a simple, humble, obedient faith of which I do not know, among younger philosophers and theologians, the equal. With greater equanimity than they, Maritain seems able to note and to digest institutional sins and inadequacies, and to discern even in untoward and evil deeds some working of the Holy Spirit. When he says "Church," he says something at once mystical and realistic. He pays the verbal formulae of the Church a great seriousness. Younger theologians, less certain of how precisely to discern the Spirit in the interplay of historical and institutional argument, approach more cautiously the language and symbols used by the Church during its various epochs. They do not have—they are certain it is not right to have—Maritain's literal certainty.

Concerning the intuition of being, Maritain tries once again to evoke for his readers what cannot be said. Twice in this volume he tries to clarify what he means and to block misunderstandings. Contemporary Anglo-American philosophers are not sympathetic to appeals to personal experience, even if Maritain is calling attention to *their* personal experience. Moreover, Maritain's basic metaphor for this intuition, "seeing," and even the word "intuition," are both misleading. His second treatment makes that plain. There he appeals also to "listening," to "allowing to emerge," and to many other metaphors. The fact is that there is nothing to "see" or even to "hear"; being is not an object which suddenly appears upon some screen of consciousness.

WHAT IS PERHAPS most disturbing in this book is Maritain's lack of serenity. To be sure, he is con-

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cerned lest other Christians, especially professors, kneel so devoutly before the spirit of the present age that they "leave three things behind": the other world, the cross, and sanctity. I wish he were living now in America, and could feel the passionate quest of young people for holiness: reverence for themselves and others, joy, freedom, and a moral integrity strong enough to resist immense social pressures, middle-class conditioning, and prison itself. I wish he could taste the evil young people have encountered in our society, and share in their experience of redemptive suffering. I wish he could fast with them, wear sandals with them, embrace the poverty of resistance with them. I wish he could rejoice in their discovery of contemplation. I wish he could hear their biting rejection of "the spirit of the age." I do not think our secular society yields to a Christian society in its sanctity. The young may not appeal to the symbol of the cross (in fact, many of them who are not Christians do), but they understand its meaning.

It is true that in attention to the "other world" the Christians of this age are deficient. But no one can do everything; Christians in every age have been deficient. Medieval Christians could do little to change the conditions of life in this world; their imaginations were excited by the next. Our case is different. We would consider ourselves deficient were we to do, in our situation, as little as medieval men did (Aquinas included) to alter life on earth. The favorite text of many of us has become: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the mind of man to conceive" what eternal life might be. We take the hint and leave that issue to God, and meanwhile concentrate upon those secular actions with which "eternal life" is consistently linked: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, comforting the sorrowing, teaching the ignorant. This is, we believe, to seize the point.

Belief in an after life *is* waning; little emotional or imaginative emphasis supports it. Yet it still seems to many good to live as Jesus lived. If it turns out that death is not, as it appears to be, annihilation, that will be God's surprise; meanwhile it seems good to labor to diminish, as Camus said, "at least by a little the number of those who suffer."

In his earlier days, Maritain would not have done quite so much mere preaching about the immense task of "discernment and integration" that needs to be done, nor quite so much carping at his fellow laborers, of whom there are so few. And he would not have rested so comfortably upon positions he had achieved two or three decades earlier. Many of us have had his warnings fixed in mind. Many do not like Teilhardianism any more than he does. But, then, an old peasant has a right to speak his mind, and it becomes the young to offer him an ear; mocking him occasionally as he mocks them.

The errors of the recent past, Maritain writes, are no excuse in the present for fatuity, mental weakness, or mental cowardice. ". . . The amount of foolishness and intolerance in human history remains relatively constant, merely passing from one camp to the other, changing styles, and having significance in terms of opposite algebraic signs." The old peasant smiles.

Under Thirty

YOUNG RADICALS: NOTES ON COMMITTED YOUTH. By KENNETH KENISTON. *Harcourt, Brace & World. 268 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by WALTER GOODMAN

NO ONE KNOWS better than Kenneth Keniston that fourteen interviews do not constitute an unshakable foundation for a study of *Young Radicals,* even when the claim carries the modifier, "Notes on Committed Youth." Yet Keniston has built just such a study on just such a foundation, and once again, as with *The Uncommitted,* his work on "Alienated Youth in American Society," his observations are more impressive than his evidence.

Keniston, an associate professor of psychology at Yale Medical

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WALTER GOODMAN'S *new book,* The Committee *(Farrar, Straus & Giroux), a study of the House Un-American Activities Committee, was reviewed in our July issue by Robert Lekachman.*

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School, invites our trust not by means of a rigorous methodology—that scrap of stuff which less talented members of his trade have borrowed from the proper sciences in order to cover their nakedness—but by means of his candor, his intelligence, and his sensibility. He is no reductivist; he understands that political movements do not altogether lend themselves to psychological explanations, and he has a grasp of the larger conditions that help to explain them. He does not use the case history as a device for putting down his subjects or for shielding himself from human complexity. He is sympathetic to the ideals and receptive to the problems of his fourteen young people, and he takes pains to relate them to their time and place. As a result, he has produced an illuminating book.

The group on which Keniston concentrates were workers in the national office of the 1967 Vietnam Summer project—a major and quite successful effort, initiated by a part of the New Left, to create wide opposition to the war. He talked with eleven men and three women, all white, all between the ages of nineteen and twenty-nine, all radicals. No blacks here; nor any of the more manic New Leftists who thrive on demonstrations and cannot abide office work; nor any of those who, because of their principles and temperament, are turned off by big operations and prefer to do their thing with small groups in poor neighborhoods. Nevertheless, Keniston's radicals do represent a significant—and rather attractive—part of the New Left, and he has an abundance of interesting things to say about them. He finds, for instance, that they are not in rebellion against their parents, who have given them "great strength, integrity, and worth," nor are they merely carrying on a heritage of the Old Left. They seem to have absorbed their ideals from liberal-to-Communist parents, but they have been troubled by the ineffectuality of the older folks in doing away with inequality, injustice, and violence. In their somewhat restricted view, the main accomplishments of American liberalism are ghettos in the cities and blood in Vietnam.

(Keniston is least persuasive when he attempts to establish a causal relationship between the violence of our age and the development of a passionate anti-violence among his non-typical New Leftists. To be sure, our technology is murderous, but direct contact with violence was certainly rarer as this generation was growing up than during most periods of our history. I would think that in the development of fundamental attitudes, it is personal experience that counts.)

Keniston notes that the famous generational gap separates not only young radicals and old liberals. There is also a chasm between the twenty-nine-year-old radical, on the verge of losing his youth credentials, and the nineteen-year-old radical, mistrustful of everybody who failed yesterday and is not quite with it today—a situation that discourages the development of leaders but keeps the Movement from being taken over by perennial students. Part of being "with it" is a readiness to swing with the most up-to-the-second technology; Keniston observes how naturally and pleasurably the radical organizers use the latest means of communication and transportation which, in their more polemical moods, they attack as symbols of the national decline. They are truly children of the times and of the nation they despise.

A MOST STRIKING characteristic of the New Left, which Keniston does much to elucidate, is the tendency to evaluate political action in personal terms. Where others have seen men's conflicts on earth as reflections of the ultimate struggle between Satan and the angels of God, or as the working-out of historical necessity, these young radicals fit their activism into the course of their emotional development. It has a place there, obviously, and the conscious quest for a sense of personal achievement gives them a much more spontaneous quality than the radicals of the 30's ever had or particularly cared to have. At the same time, however, the identification of political goals with personal satisfactions holds obvious perils.

For one thing, an action that leaves one exhilarated, happy, and fulfilled may nonetheless work against one's objective goals. Then, too, private despair can lead to desperate and self-defeating tactics. What is more, there are no ready measures of one's emotional development; one just has to *feel* that things are shaping up. It is, of course, true that working together for a cause—no matter whether the cause is good or bad—is conducive to warm inter-personal relations; who knows what undying friendships were formed in the Hitler Jugend? "In your heart you know he's right!" the Goldwater posters proclaimed, and millions surely did know. The heart and the viscera doubtless have their reasons, but reliance on them is unfortunately associated with a denigration of intellect and the kind of smug arrogance exhibited by some of the SDS leaders who led the takeover at Columbia University. The New Left is peculiarly vulnerable to both afflictions.*

Keniston is aware of the darker side of the New Left's apparent virtues, but as the book draws on, his affection for the young people he interviewed and his sympathy with their cause prompt him to trade the role of observer for that of apologist. Perhaps Keniston felt that he was thereby keeping trust with his new, idealistic friends who had been so frank with him on such short acquaintance, but his change of role has the effect of weakening his work. Indeed, by the final pages, his subjects have become his clients.

Certainly the New Left has considerable charm—and particularly the branch of it with which Keniston is involved in this book. Its members are bright and decent and many of them have proved their willingness to sacrifice for the sake of their ideals such conventional objectives as a college degree or a good job. They are not caught up in the factionalism, conspiracies, and bureaucratism of the Old Left; they are not trapped by doctrine; and they are wary of being controlled or manipulated from within or without. Keniston writes: "The New Left is different from the Old Left in part *because*

*See "The Politics of Self-Indulgence" in Arnold S. Kaufman's *The Radical Liberal*, Atherton Press, 1968.

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it emphasizes process rather than program, and *because* it seeks to avoid the doctrinaire interpretation of society, the rigid structuring of goals, and the inflexible definitions of the ideal of earlier radicalism."

All of these welcome traits are tied in with a psychologized politics, the pursuit through political activity of the satisfactions of commitment, of inner harmony, of friendship and love. There is, however, no reason to believe that political effectiveness necessarily grows out of such satisfactions. Causes like peace and civil rights require more than the hard work, dedication, and courage of which the young radicals have proved themselves capable; if these causes are to be sustained, they also require an emotional discipline that admits of compromise and ambiguous success. There is nothing very warming about compromise, and there is nothing so burdensome for relations among comrades as a dubious success. Disappointment is difficult enough to bear in any high-pitched movement; where what is constantly at stake is the activist's total happiness, every disappointment threatens to become a personal tragedy that can only distort one's outlook on the world.

So THOROUGHLY politicized is the New Leftist that he may in fact become politically irrelevant; for, as Keniston notes, keeping up with the Movement requires an estrangement from American life. Keniston is not unaware of the "unrealistic" qualities of the New Left, its impatience with undramatic long-term programs, but he argues that criticisms of its ineffectiveness "somehow miss the point" since its goals are not to win elections but "to increase the social and political consciousness of the American people." Such a distinction, it seems to me, can easily become an excuse for finking out.

After years of complaining about the Silent Generation and its rejection of politics, I confess to a certain discomfort in finding myself chiding young people for investing too much of themselves in a movement which has had such a remarkable influence on the country. Yet for the sake of his private needs as well as his public goals, the radical must, I think, sort out which satisfactions he can reasonably hope to extract from any single source. Political action in a democracy is necessary, but in a man's life it is far from sufficient. "The attempt to change as a person and the effort to create a radical movement can no longer be clearly distinguished," writes Keniston. To the extent that this is true, the New Leftists are likely to find that they are simply asking too much of politics.

Critical Myth

THE MODERN CENTURY. By NORTHROP FRYE. *Oxford University Press. 112 pp. $3.00.*

Reviewed by DAVID SCHILLER

LIKE ARISTOTLE, Northrop Frye is a taxonomic critic, a biologist of the body of literature. Just as a biologist sees the structure and function of each part of an organism both in isolation and in relation to the whole, so in *The Anatomy of Criticism* (first published in 1957, and still his most important book) Frye isolates each genre, myth, and archtypal literary symbol and then describes it in terms of the total structure and function of literature. For Frye, literature, like biology, is an autonomous and coherent discipline. In the manner of a primitive biologist, he has given us a system of classification, the first coherent theory which enables a student to tell where, in the totality of his literary experiences, an individual experience belongs.

Frye sees criticism as systematically and neutrally descriptive, as not based on anything outside the structures of literature as they present themselves to an informed imagination. In so defining criticism, he willingly abrogates the critic's moral function: he does not provide a basis on which to formulate ethics or justify life-styles, and his vocabulary is inevitably non-

DAVID SCHILLER *reviewed Robert Graves's* Love Respelt *in the February 1967* COMMENTARY. *Mr. Schiller will be teaching at Antioch next year.*

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political. Nevertheless, there are suggestions in *The Anatomy of Criticism* itself, and in some of Frye's subsequent books like *The Educated Imagination*, of a mode of thought which is, perhaps in the broadest possible sense, "political." For Frye is concerned not only with the forms of literature as they affect an audience, but with the ultimate goals of literary study.

By having systematically connected literature with myth and ritual, Frye has suggested that part of the structure and function of literature is the creation of community. For Frye, the mythical aspect of art presents an audience with an ideal world, with the vision of a society which is more permanent and therefore more "real" than the one we know. In *The Educated Imagination*, originally delivered as six radio talks, Frye defines the way in which literature and the arts are absorbed into society through education. The title of the final chapter of this book, "The Vocation of Eloquence," comes from a poem by St. John Perse, the theme of which is the founding of a new city. In that chapter Frye suggests a program of literary study by which the imaginations of the young may be educated around a coherent set of symbols and stories. The Bible, considered to be our most complete mythology and therefore the basis of later literature, should be taught "so early and so thoroughly that it sinks straight to the bottom of the mind, where everything that comes along later can settle on it." Similarly, pagan myths should be studied in such a way as to make clear their similarities to the myths of the Bible. The mythological basis of humanistic education, according to Frye, has a social value, since "the myths and images of literature . . . enter into and give form to all the structures we build out of words," even if those structures operate only as advertising, propaganda, or political rhetoric. A coherent understanding of mythology enables us to criticize, as free men, the incoherent and debased mythologies of our own time. Such an educational program would, Frye thinks, become the common experience of the literate and the humane. It would liberate the imagination to do its fundamental job, which is "to produce, out of the society we have to live in, a vision of the society we want to live in."

THE MYTH that organizes *The Educated Imagination* is, Frye tells us, the biblical story of the Tower of Babel. What the myth tells us is this: once, we all had a single language, not some imaginary tongue which is the basis of English, Russian, and Chinese, but "the language of human nature, the language which makes both Shakespeare and Pushkin authentic poets." Like the myth of the Fall, the story of the Tower of Babel implies the antecedent existence of a superior condition, a community which fulfilled desires and organized the imagination around a coherent set of symbols. This community is the paradise we have lost, and it is, Frye implies, the state to which we must return.

Frye's theory of literary education is an example of what Frye himself calls "ethical" criticism, that is, criticism which deals with literature in its contemporary application. Ethical criticism derives its power to set the conditions for value-judgment from its concern with the presence of culture in the community. This type of criticism defines the personal uses of literature as the re-creation of the self through that "vision of a decisive act of spiritual freedom" which art presents to its audience. Learning how to read involves the reader, therefore, in the creation of his identity as a free man, and in the creation of a new community of free men. And so the kind of literary criticism which teaches us how to read properly, assumes the largest sort of cultural importance.

THE MODERN CENTURY is a book-length example of "ethical criticism." In it Frye attempts to describe the modern "mythology," which he defines as the "structure of ideas, images, beliefs, assumptions, anxieties, and hopes which express the view of man's situation and destiny generally held" in our time. The first chapter of the

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book, called "City of the End of Things," describes "the alienation of progress," one of the elements which constitute the modern mythology. Modern consciousness, in this reading, ends in despair because of its obsessive need to "keep up" with an impossibly fast stream of events. Its mythical analogue is the medieval legend of the Wild Hunt, "in which souls of the dead had to keep marching to nowhere all day and all night at top speed." In modern times, the conception of alienation has become psychological, and its "central symbol" is "the overkill bomb."

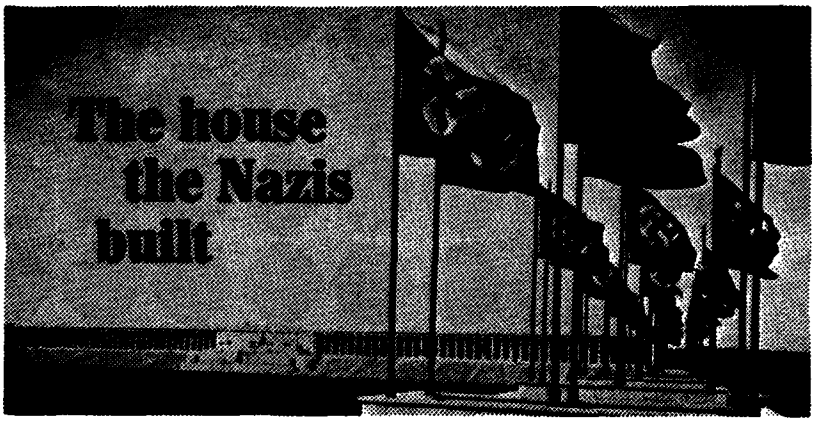
> In a world where the tyrant-enemy can be recognized, even defined, and yet cannot be projected on anything or anybody, he remains part of ourselves, or more precisely of our own death-wish, a cancer which gradually disintegrates the sense of community.

It is also Frye's contention that modern technology has created a new sense of time. Technology involves "the continued sacrificing of a visible present to an invisible future":

> . . . progress is a social projection of the individual's sense of the passing of time. But the individual, as such, is not progressing to anything except his own death. Hence the collapse of belief in progress reinforces the sense of anxiety which is rooted in the consciousness of death. Alienation and anxiety become the same thing. . . .

For all its concision and clarity, this description of the modern situation ignores those political or historical facts which are the causes and consequences of alienation and anxiety. A radical distrust of the benevolence of progress is indeed one of the emotions which constitute the modern mythology. But that this distrust can issue in a new set of moral choices and political actions is a fact which Frye's vocabulary of cultural forms can engage only in a peripheral way. He can deal with such choices and actions only insofar as they can be "placed" in conceptual space, either juxtaposed or in opposition to other "elements" or "phenomena" that have been similarly isolated and defined by his vocabulary.

To be sure, Frye's vocabulary also brings him to a number of fine critical insights. "Improved Binoculars," the second chapter of *The Modern Century*, is concerned to define what is "modern" in modern art and literature. Modern art, Frye says, is "born on a battlefield, where the enemies are the anti-arts of passive impression." Frye claims that the militant situation in which modern art finds itself has created a radical split, even an antagonism, between the artist and his audience. From this situation has derived the modern affinity for extreme states of feeling, for primitivism, for the outcast, the criminal, and the sadistic, for whatever threatens a passive or a bourgeois response to experience. The adversary position of



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the artist requires, therefore, that he engage his audience in an intensely active response to his creation.

LIKE THE description of alienation and anxiety, this description is accurate and clear. But it fails, strangely enough in a writer of Frye's logical power, to fit into his theory of the autonomy of art. The active response which modern literature asks of its audience is not a response simply to the art-work "as such." On the contrary: the desired response involves a revaluation of experience as newly perceived with the artist's aid; sometimes, as in Brecht and Lawrence, literature might even demand of the reader that he engage in a specific set of actions. These actions are likely to be political, for in our time, as Thomas Mann observed, the destiny of man presents itself in political terms.

Now if we accept Mann's statement as at least one element in our modern situation, we must, in order to make our destiny benevolent, act as political men, and in the realm of public affairs. But it is just this form of action which cannot be included in Frye's purview. Not only is the vocabulary of politics missing from his work, it is devalued. Indeed, no such vocabulary can be derived from the terms in which Frye has consistently chosen to understand experience.

FINALLY, Frye's vocabulary ends by imitating what it describes: it becomes autonomous, and loses the power to relate itself to our non-literary concerns in any but the most general way. One sometimes has the sense, in following his brilliant and crowded career, of being in a world completely understood by a mind wholly conscious of its own ironies, a world in which insight is possible or valued insofar as it can be assimilated into a pre-established, formal theory of literature and culture. At the end of *The Modern Century*, Frye describes the world we live in as not the world of Blake's lamb but the world of his "tyger"; not the world of the child, a world which has parents too, but the adult's world, "which was never created or seen to be good." Still

> . . . in all our efforts to imagine or realize a better society, some shadow falls across it of the child's innocent vision of the impossible created world that makes human sense.

Having said that, having described the vision of an ideal city, he has to stop. He can only accept the consequences of the vocabulary he has chosen; he is reduced to ironic silence. This silence is as far as the mythical mode of thought can take him, and should be enough to indicate its limitations.

Midrash

THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM: AN EXCURSION INTO JEWISH HISTORY. By CHAIM RAPHAEL. *Knopf. 230 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID DAICHES

CHAIM RAPHAEL, it might almost be said, has invented a new *genre* of historical writing. Taking the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 C.E. as the great traumatic experience of Jewish history, and the haunting of the Jewish imagination by that destruction as the most conspicuous thread that runs through all subsequent Jewish life and thought, he has explored his theme through a discursive commentary on the Midrash on Lamentations. The biblical Book of Lamentations is a threnody on the destruction of Jerusalem; the Midrash on Lamentations, in Mr. Raphael's words, "reflects the memories, perplexities, and dreams that the rabbis—mostly of the second and third centuries of the Christian era—centered on this awesome event, giving their minds free rein as they sat discussing the Bible in synagogues and study rooms, at weddings and funerals, or indeed anywhere and on any occasion, private or public, which lent itself to discourse or simple conversation." Mr. Raphael's book is thus cast in a characteristically rabbinical form —a commentary on a commentary. But the nature of his commentary is quite untraditional.

The introductory section tells the story of his own involvement with the Midrash on Lamentations, in an engaging free-associational manner that combines autobiography with a great range of illustrative references from Shakespeare to Saul Bellow, from Judah Halevi to William Carlos Williams, from the siege of Masada to the Battle of Britain. (Sometimes his genial ease of reference leads him into error: he talks of the significance of the battle of Culloden for the Scots when clearly he means the battle of Flodden.) Here we recognize the Raphael of *Memoirs of a Special Case*, which first showed his ability to give autobiography a dimension of cultural history. It is, incidentally, interesting to compare this kind of history-through-autobiography with the kind represented by Alfred Kazin's *A Walker in the City* and *Starting Out in the Thirties*. Kazin is involved with his generation in America, Raphael with the history and imagination of the Jewish people. Not that Raphael refrains from using material from his own childhood and youth in England and from his long stay in America: but for him the present is conditioned and colored and flavored by a past which stretches back unbroken to biblical times, while Kazin is (in a wholly honorable way) much more self-centered, concerned with his own life as illustrating his own times and with his own times as illustrating his own life.

THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS refers to the first destruction of Jerusalem, by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.E. It gives little or no historical detail, painting in somber poetry a tragic picture of mourning and desolation. But the rabbis interpreted it to refer to both destructions, the history of the second of which we know in much greater detail—detail which, while not known to the rabbis from historical sources, was available to them through folk memory and the folk

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imagination, often in distorted, embroidered, or symbolic form. In his second section Mr. Raphael explains the relationship between history and imagination in the rabbinical mind by the way in which he paints in the historical background, especially the story of the Roman conquest and the final revolt of Bar Kokhbah. He weaves together his account of the historical facts and his explanation of how they were to appear to the Jewish mind in retrospect, using historical works from Josephus to modern scholarship on the Dead Sea Scrolls and a great variety of talmudic and midrashic material. This is a wholly successful chapter, in which Mr. Raphael performs the feat of simultaneously separating historical fact from later fanciful intepretation of it and demonstrating how history itself determined the nature of that later fanciful intepretation. Throughout two thousand years, the Jews were the prisoners of history in a way hard to parallel among other peoples, and this was because they constructed the prison themselves by the way they interpreted their own past.

The third section (which concludes the first part of the book) is essentially a history of the development of midrashic activity with some account of the environment out of which it arose. Whether a satisfactory picture of the nature, sources, and growth of this extraordinary mixture of folklore, homily, anecdote, ethical discourse, historical chat, biographical reminiscence, and textual explication by the use of every conceivable kind of parallel, analogy, punning, letter counting, and intellectual gymnastics ranging from the puerile to the downright fantastic, can be provided in just over thirty pages is doubtful. Certainly, the reader who has not a prior interest in the subject might well find this section, with its thickening footnotes, rather heavy going. Mr. Raphael has not quite found a way here of integrating his knowledge and insights into a rich yet free-flowing narrative, independent of scholarly interruptions and exceptions. Perhaps this is an impossible ideal, but it is a pity that a writer as attractive and lively as Mr. Raphael should in this part of his book occasionally sound like a Ph.D. candidate.

The second part of the book consists of passages from the Midrash on Lamentations "arranged under subjects, to echo the historical story," in Mr. Raphael's own translation. It is divided into six sections; the first collecting passages on such topics as "How angry was God?" and (in Mr. Raphael's subheading) "Why Does Everybody Hate Us So?"; the second assembling passages relating to earlier biblical history (King David, Nebuchadnezzar, the part played by the archangels in the first destruction of Jerusalem); the third a scrap-book of passages of nostalgic folk memories of life in Jerusalem before the Roman destruction; the fourth about the Roman destruction itself; the fifth about Bar Kokhbah's revolt; and the sixth and last, entitled "Life Goes On," showing the adjustment to a life of endless waiting in endless hope for the Restoration. Each section has an introduction in which Mr. Raphael chats pleasantly and often wittily about the kind of imagination at work in the passages that follow.

WHAT ARE WE to make of the Midrash? It reveals a mental world very foreign indeed to that inhabited by most modern readers. Its assumption that the whole text of the Hebrew Bible exists simultaneously and contemporaneously as a unified work in which any passage of any date and by any author can be used to explain or amplify any other passage would be outrageous to modern scholars. Its habit of illustrating something simple by something complicated, as when a rabbi explains a simple and moving outburst of grief in Lamentations with parallels from the prophets, anecdotes about God, or stories about a king who gave a party or dismissed his wife or took up his infant son who dirtied his pants so that the king hastily put him down again—all this, we sometimes feel, positively destroys the moving eloquence of the book that is being "explained." Or again, the positively obsessive concern with the destruction of Jerusalem as a *punishment*, involving searching out and cataloguing with masochis-

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tic relish the abominations practiced by the Jews before God let Himself be provoked sufficiently not only to allow, but positively to plan, the destruction of His City and His Temple—this may seem ethically offensive, and surprising, too, in the light of the protest made in the Book of Job against the view that suffering implies prior sin. Mr. Raphael's comments always pick out and emphasize the human elements, the analogies with modern Jewish jokes or with life in occupied France in 1940. He cocks a quizzical yet sympathetic eye at this extraordinary gallimaufry. After all, it is a profound part of the Jewish reaction to tragedy. The resilience is there as well as the self-condemnation. Rabbi Akiba will laugh aloud, while his companions weep, at some gruesome and specific evidence of the destruction, because for him it is a guarantee that if the prophecy of destruction was fulfilled so will the prophecy of restoration eventually be also. A rabbi tells a story about a king who married a woman and refused to let her have any contact with her neighbors: when her neighbors turned against her as a result, the woman said to the king that it was all his fault for if he had not insisted on her behaving so standoffishly she would not have made enemies. It's the same with Israel, the rabbi goes on: God insisted on their keeping themselves separate, so it's God's fault if their neighbors treat them cruelly. "Surely—*thou hast done it*!" the rabbi says to God, concluding his interpretation of the phrase "that thou hast done it" in Lamentations 1:21. There is grief, and self-reproach, and a pervasive nostalgia for a lost glory; but there is also a humorous or indignant familiarity with God which surprises not only by its tone but by its rank anthropomorphism. The God of the Midrash is indeed remarkably human.

In a sense it could be argued that the Midrash, like rabbinic commentary generally, destroys the Bible by its combination of literalism and unhistorical license. The rabbis saw the Bible as an inexhaustible quarry from which a dedicated hewer could hew almost anything. They were as opposed as Professor Wimsatt to the "intentional fallacy"—but for very different reasons. Not for them any investigation into what a biblical author meant when he uttered certain words. The question was, What did God mean by arranging to have these words set down, alongside all the others, in His holy book? It can all be very exasperating, yet it is fascinating too. And if we read it with Mr. Raphael looking over our shoulder to show us what to look for, we see in it something desperately, touchingly, sometimes almost unbearably human. I have observed that the God of the Midrash is remarkably human. So are the Jews of the Midrash. And we know that Jews in general are human like other people, only more so. Perhaps it is that "more so" that accounts for everything, not only the Midrash but also Jewish history.

Fantasia

THE DISNEY VERSION. By RICHARD SCHICKEL. *Simon and Schuster. 384 pp. $6.50.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH EPSTEIN

NO FIELD CAN compete with popular culture in offering the intellectual such boundless opportunities for making an ass of himself. For both its attackers and its defenders, popular culture has proved to be a road strewn with potholes and with soft shoulders everywhere. Some fall into the trap of discovering in it the quintessential expression of the masses, the genius, as it were, of the Great Unwashed; they give the impression of finding treasure where none is buried. Others are trapped into viewing it as an element that incessantly invades the realm of higher culture and threatens to dilute it. Taking upon themselves the role of guardian of this higher culture, they mercilessly attack the products of popular culture—and frequently convey the impression of hunting a mouse with a Howitzer. There is, however, a middle

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course. It is open to those blessed few whose substantial intellectual endowments combine with a temperament for enjoying popular culture without condescension when it is well done, and who are able to discern in it, no matter what its quality, important elements of the national consciousness. Robert Warshow's essays on Western and gangster movies are models of this kind of writing at its very best, and James Agee, the finest American prose stylist ever to address himself to the subject, seldom failed to write intelligently about it. Now it is good to be able to report that Richard Schickel, when he hits his stride in *The Disney Version,* joins the select group of writers on popular culture who are interesting for reasons other than their excesses.

WALT DISNEY provides a splendid test case for Mr. Schickel's talents. As much pure blather has been written about him as about any figure in American popular culture. During his lifetime Disney was a victim of extremes in intellectual opinion; he was alternately condemned as a vicious sell-out who cruelly and cynically exploited his own talent, or praised as a genius of DaVincian extravagance. The Leonardo treatment was accorded him by no less an eminence than Mark Van Doren, who once remarked of Disney that "the main thing is that he lives somewhere near the human center and knows innumerable truths that cannot be taught. . . . With him, as with any first-rate artist, we feel that we are in good hands; we can trust him with our hearts and wits." Others saw in his films, and especially in Disneyland, not merely the decline but the absolute fall of the West.

By contrast, Mr. Schickel argues persuasively that Walt Disney was neither an American Fellini nor a Gentile Samuel Goldwyn. Instead he was a careful and extremely successful businessman; a man with an extraordinary aptitude for technical innovation in his field; and a purveyor of entertainments whose pulse beat to the same tempo as the millions who came to view them. In point of fact, Disney was a rather dull man whose dullness was somewhat redeemed by a striking freedom from personal pretentiousness. He considered his great achievement to be the solidity of his business—a solidity, at least in later years, which Mr. Schickel documents with some impressive financial figures—and by and large he left the matter of his artistic reputation to his publicity department and to the unpaid intellectual claques who professed to see in his work a revival of the American folklorist tradition. (When one of his animators decided to take piano lessons in connection with his work on *Fantasia,* Disney is said to have asked him: "What are you, some kind of fag?") Disney's favorite god was not Orpheus, with his gift of art, but Prometheus, with his gift of fire.

Dragging Greek gods into a discussion of Walt Disney is more than a little precious, but let it stand. It illustrates, I think, the way popular culture tends to loosen some of the intellectual junk that gathers in the attic of one's mind. Even the sensible Mr. Schickel is not immune to this affliction, and one of the defects of his book—though it is surely a minor one—is a richness of allusion that is sometimes out of proportion to his subject matter. Observations from Isaiah Berlin, Arthur Koestler, and William Carlos Williams, among others, crop up in his pages, and these seem to have roughly the effect of three bishops casually dropping in at a stag party. Those who enjoy the ironies of propinquity will delight in the book's index, in which Sir Isaiah's name appears only three entries away from Bix Biederbecke, and Dr. Williams's only six away from Woody the Woodpecker.

"ALL WE ARE trying to do is give the public good entertainment," Disney remarked in the late 30's. "That is all they want." It was certainly all he wanted himself—and this was simultaneously the source of his strength and his weakness. Mr. Schickel quotes Lewis Mumford on this point: "The truth of the matter is that almost all our literature and art is produced by the public, by people, that is to say, whose education, whose mental bias, whose intellectual discipline does not differ by so much as the contents of a spelling book from the great body of readers who enjoy their work." It is the particular virtue of Mr. Schickel's biography that he gives us a very precise sense indeed of Walt Disney's education, mental bias, and intellectual discipline, and that by doing so he also manages to say some important things about America.

For Mr. Schickel, Disney is almost completely the product of his regional background, the small-town American Midwest. "One thinks of Disney's Americanism," he writes, "of the kind of clean, moral, simple, and innocent stories he most often chose to present on the screen, of the right-wing politics of his later years, of his broad, gag-oriented sense of humor, containing no elements of social or self-satire, as entirely typical of the region that formed him." Thus, although Disney presided over a multi-million dollar enterprise with publicly-owned

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stock, he always retained the small businessman's impulse for total control. Thus, too, although Disney lived most of his life in Los Angeles, the most aggressively modern of American big cities, he always retained the general outlook of the small-town midwesterner. The word "culture," he once said, "seems to have an un-American look to me—sort of snobbish and affected—as if it thought it were better than the next fellow. Actually, as I understand it, culture isn't that kind of snooty word at all . . . a fellow becomes cultured, I believe, by selecting that which is fine and beautiful in life, and throwing aside that which is mediocre or phoney. Sort of a series of free, very personal choices. . . ." One of Disney's own cultural choices was to deny the rights to the tune of "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" to the producers of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, lest its presence in that play tarnish the Disney reputation.

THE DISNEY VERSION is a model of good judgment, exemplary in balance and impeccable in tone. Patiently, carefully, convincingly, its author examines the events in Disney's life and extracts the elements of autobiographical influence in his creations. Doing full justice to the man, he reminds us that in the field of animation Disney was as radical an innovator as Frank Lloyd Wright was in architecture. Nor does Mr. Schickel accept the verdict of the many critics who claim that in Disney's case commerce wrecked art. Indeed, in the early years things came closer to working out the other way around. Disney was a lifelong perfectionist, and at first the price of technical perfection frequently exceeded the price his cartoons brought from distributors; more than once, he stood at the brink of economic ruin. He did, to be sure, take up part of the slack by underpaying his employees, and in later years his business savvy was such that he became his own distributor, but he always tried to give "dollar value" to his millions of customers.

No one will doubt that Disney understood his customers. "My belief," he said late in life, "is that there are more people who want to smile than those who want to be artistically depressed." That is a philistine notion of the proper function of art, but attacks on Disney's philistinism are finally so much blowing in the wind. His balance sheet didn't belie his aesthetics, nor were any of his stockholders known to quote Aristotle to him. Yet if one wishes to characterize Disney as essentially a businessman, one must go on to say that he was in a public service industry, and that he did perform the public service of allowing people to put by reality for a bit. Mr. Schickel catches this point with his usual precision:

> When we seemed to demand an optimistic myth he gave us the unconquerable Mouse. When we seemed to demand the sense of continuity implicit in reminders of our past, he gave us fairy tales in a form we could easily accept. When we demanded neutral, objective factuality, he gave us the nature films. When, in a time of deep inner stress, we demanded another kind of unifying vision, he gave us a simplified and rosy-hued version of the small town and rural America that may have formed our institutions and our heritage but no longer forms us as individuals. When we demanded, at last, not formal statements but simply environments in which to lose ourselves, he gave us those in the amusement park built and the amusement parks still to come.

It would be the grossest error to think that any of these accomplishments resulted from his cynicism. Walt Disney was able to cater to the appetite for fantasy because his own hunger to escape reality was at least as great as that of his countrymen. In his summing up, Mr. Schickel locates Disney in the American industrial and entrepreneurial tradition. "It is culturally blind," he writes, "not to see that Disney was a forceful and, in his special way, imaginative worker in this, our only great tradition." Along this line it might be best to think of him as head of the nation's largest pharmaceutical firm—until his death, America's foremost dispenser of placebos. His success would doubtless have been less great had he not been hooked on his own products.

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